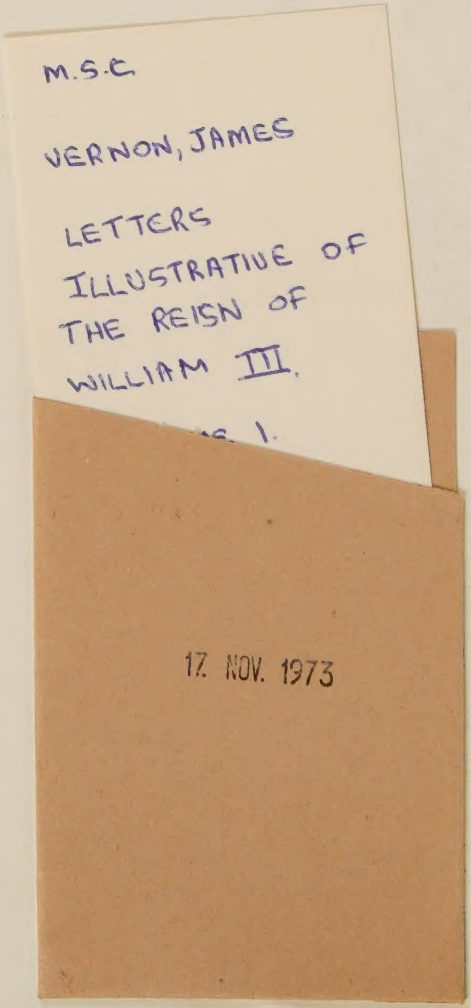
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ILLUSTRATIVE OF
THE REIGN OF
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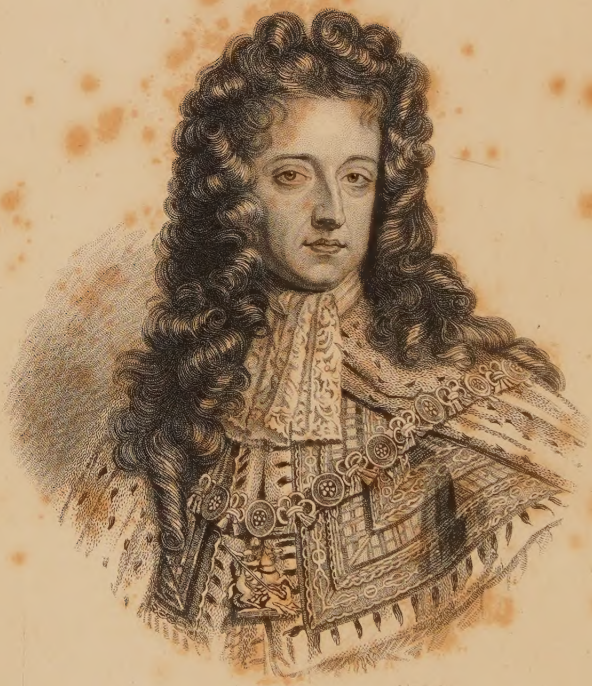

His Majesty

WILLIAM THE THIRD.

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LETTERS

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE

REIGN OF WILLIAM III.

FROM 1696 TO 1708.

ADDRESSED TO

THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY,

BY

JAMES VERNON, Esq.

SECRETARY OF STATE.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINALS.

EDITED BY

G. P. R. JAMES, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "MEMOIRS OF THE COURT OF LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH," "RICHELIEU," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES,

VOL. I.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
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1841.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Letters about to be submitted to the public, afford many minute and accurate details regarding some of the most interesting points of British history which have been either left in darkness by other contemporary authors, or obscured by the political prejudices of the writers who have subsequently treated of those times. There can be no doubt that the author of these letters himself, though evidently of a cold and cautious temper, was affected, in a strong degree, by political partialities; but the value of his correspondence is chiefly derived from the clear picture of events which it displays; and whatever may be the justness of his opinions, the correctness of his statements, as far as they have hitherto been made public, has never been denied. Although not one of the most distinguished men of his day,

the author was distinguished, and apparently, by his talent and penetration, deserved more distinction than he obtained. He had every opportunity of procuring the most accurate information on all subjects, and in the end gained the greatest triumphs over prejudice, having completely won the confidence and esteem of several persons who, in the outset of his career, not only suspected his integrity, but checked his advancement, from a conviction of his infidelity.

At the period of the commencement of these letters, Mr. Vernon had not yet reached any very eminent station, and a minute account of his preceding life would prove of very little interest to the general reader, though a few words on the subject may not be unnecessary. James Vernon was the son of Francis Vernon, Esq. and Anne Smithes, and by the father's side was descended from an ancient family of Cheshire. His mother was the daughter of a respectable merchant of the city of London, and having obtained, at an early period, an appointment in the office of Secretary of State, he proceeded slowly, and apparently without acquiring any great distinction, till after the famous revolution of 1688.

His perfect knowledge of business and active habits, however, had made themselves conspicuous by that time; and it would appear that he had attracted the attention of the King and the Earl of Shrewsbury. But those were days of doubt and suspicion, and the enemies—perhaps the rivals—of Vernon, took care to insinuate that he was not to be trusted. When Shrewsbury, in the autumn of 1689, showed a desire to resign his post on account of ill health (as he himself declared), it would seem that Portland was directed by the King to confer with him regarding the nomination of some person to relieve him from a part of the toils of office, either as Under Secretary of State or in some similar capacity. Vernon was then spoken of; but objected to by the King, in whose reasons for excluding him we find Shrewsbury coinciding in the following strong terms:—"Upon discourse with my Lord Portland," he says, in his letter to William, of the date 11th September, 1689, "I find what your Majesty had already hinted to me concerning Mr. Vernon, to be thought by many, only with this aggravation, that whereas people have an ill opinion of Dr. Wynn, as suspecting his disaffection only to

this government, they have a prejudice to the other's morals in general, and think this was not observed when he was under Mr. Fenton. But he can be faithful to none now, it seems."

Not long after this letter was written, Shrewsbury found additional motives for urging the King to accept his resignation, and finally sent the seals to William, by the Earl of Portland, on the 2nd June, 1690. He was prevailed upon with the greatest difficulty to return to office, in the spring of 1694, and I am not aware that in this interval Vernon received any promotion. The opinion of the Duke of Shrewsbury, however, must have greatly changed since he wrote the letter above cited, as very shortly after having again accepted the seals as Secretary of State, that minister engaged Mr. Vernon as his private secretary. After this he was employed in various important affairs, but still, as is too often the case, his merits and his claims, apparently undervalued by himself, were undervalued by others, so that, in the year 1697, even after he had conducted, with the greatest skill and wisdom, the unfortunate affair of Sir John Fenwick to a close, we find him likely to be left utterly unprovided for, having lost a

place in the Prize Office by the peace, and having no longer a post in the Secretary of State's office. Thus, at the close of that year, although Vernon was an able and useful member of the House of Commons, Shrewsbury himself, on the eve of retiring from office for ever, was only bold enough to ask the King for a small colonial appointment, for a man who had served him so faithfully. He thus writes to William, who was then in Holland, on the 6th October, o. s., 1697: "Having a very great compassion for Mr. Vernon's circumstances, who has a numerous family, and has lost his place in the Prize Office by the peace, and will now be out of employment in Secretary of State's office, I have writ to him upon it, and find his modesty is such as he would be satisfied with Blancard's place in Jamaica, which I hope your majesty will please to grant him, for I am sure you have not a more faithful, and not many more capable servants in the kingdom."

Yet, strange to say, the complicated state of political intrigue existing at that moment, was likely to elevate the very object of the Duke's compassion to the high office he was going to resign; and by

some of Vernon's* own letters it is made evident that Lord Sunderland the Chamberlain, if not the King himself had determined, should Shrewsbury persist in resigning suddenly, to place Vernon at once in the office, rather than allow the more zealous whigs to seize upon it for the benefit of Wharton, who was personally obnoxious to the King. Such would probably have been the result, had not the sudden and unexpected resignation of Sir William Trumbull left another office of equal importance vacant. It is very evident that the resignation of Trumbull, who had long been on ill terms with the rest of the ministers, was urged on by the intrigues of some of the Whig leaders, in order to thrust Lord Wharton into the office thus left free; though, if such were the case, it is to be supposed from his letters, that the Lord Keeper Somers was not aware of the manœuvre. No sooner, however, was the resignation of the Secretary of State known, than his successor was determined upon by the King and the Earl of Sunderland. In order not to offend

* Letters, 23rd October, 1697, and 2nd December, 1697. In the latter he alludes to a former conversation with Lord Sunderland, on his probable appointment.

either Lord Wharton or Lord Tankerville, who were both put forward as aspirants to office, the reason assigned for the King's decision in favour of Vernon, was the service he might render the state in the House of Commons, of which he was a member of some distinction; and on the 2nd of December, A.D. 1697, Mr. Vernon was appointed Secretary of State. He showed considerable diffidence in accepting the office; but the course of his life after this period, at which time he was about the age of fifty-four, as well as the minute particulars of almost all the great events occurring in England during the subsequent ten years, are to be found recorded in the letters that follow; and therefore they do not require to be enlarged upon in this place.

The correspondence opens at a very interesting period of English History, when many of the great foundations of our liberty were laid amidst the struggles of faction and mercenary intrigue. The country was far from unanimous in support of the dynasty newly placed upon the throne; and it was part of the policy of the exiled House of Stuart to strengthen and encourage its partizans, and disunite and weaken its enemies, by pretending to inter-

course and sympathy with numbers of those apparently supporting the House of Nassau. That such pretences were made in many instances where there was not the slightest foundation for the assertion that any correspondence existed, there can be no doubt; but in other instances (such as that of the Duke of Marlborough) it is equally certain that communications more or less of a treasonable nature did take place. With these assertions, were combined every effort to raise the people, and by force of arms to re-seat the ancient dynasty on the throne. Thus far went the princes of the House of Stuart, we know; but their partizans proceeded to acts in which those princes, I am firmly convinced, had no share; and it would appear that more than one scheme was formed for assassinating William III.

In the beginning of the year 1696, a very extensive conspiracy having this object in view was discovered, and a number of persons were executed; but one of the principal conspirators, Sir John Fenwick, had nearly evaded the pursuit of justice, and was not secured till the middle of June, several months after the discovery of the plot.* He was taken, however,

* Evelyn says the 11th of June.

at length,* in an endeavour to effect his escape to France; and finding that his conviction was certain, he basely offered to disclose the whole plans of the party to which he was attached, on condition of his life being spared. The Lord High Steward, Duke of Devonshire, visited him by command of William; and the wretched traitor endeavoured to save his own life, by throwing out insinuations against the fidelity of several of the most eminent persons in William's court and ministry. Upon being pressed to afford more distinct information, he made a formal charge in writing, against the Duke of Shrewsbury, Lord Godolphin, Lord Marlborough, Lord Bath, Admiral Russell, and others; accusing them all of being more or less, in communication with the Court of St. Germains, and in the interests of the exiled family. The weight of the charge lay principally upon Shrewsbury and Godolphin, both of whom he represented as having for years acted under the direction of King James, and having entered into a treaty with that monarch, while actually holding office under his rival. William was at the Hague

* Some writers say at Romney, some at or near Stoke Dabernon in Surrey.

when the charge was made, and the Duke of Devonshire sent the paper drawn up by the traitor, direct to the King. William transmitted it, with calm magninimity, to Shrewsbury, assuring him of his perfect confidence.* The Duke, however, was pained and agitated in a terrible degree; and, after having put the proceedings for the trial of Fenwick in some order, and written two or three letters to William on the subject, he retired to recruit his health and spirits at Eyford, leaving Mr. Vernon, then his private secretary, to conduct the principal official business. It is with the letters written by Vernon to the Duke on this time, that the following correspondence begins.

These papers I was requested to edit by the publisher, and have his fullest assurance of their authenticity. No one, however, who looks into them, can have any doubt in that respect. I am myself perfectly satisfied that they are so; and I believe, that though one or two of the letters written may be missing, this correspondence contains almost the whole (if not the whole) of Vernon's letters now

* William, in his letter to the Duke, says that he had received the paper containing the "accusation," last week.

extant. I have little to say of my own task, which, though laborious, has not been difficult. As far as my knowledge went I have supplied, in the notes, any necessary information regarding the persons or events mentioned; but I have refrained from attempting even this where I imagined that the letters themselves gave sufficient explanations. Looking upon those letters as a historical record of events with the commentary of a cotemporary, I have abstained from all general remarks or reasonings, judging them both uncalled for and unfit, especially as our own times are still so closely connected with those here pourtrayed, that my own political sentiments (perhaps prejudices) could not be withheld in such observations. The period here treated of is, indeed, one of the most important and interesting in the history of this country, and bears immediately on the present times; but still facts are the best teachers to enlightened minds; and these letters are a treasury of facts—some very trivial, some more remarkable; but, as a whole, displaying the manners of the age, the secret conduct of celebrated men, the passions, the faults, the follies, the wisdom, the power, the magnanimity of those we have been

accustomed to look up to, the tortuous path of political intrigue, the secret motives of grand actions, the small springs of great events, and the foundation, development, and completion of institutions which affect our liberty and our happiness even in the present day.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

VOL. I.

PORTRAIT OF HIS MAJESTY WILLIAM III. *Frontispiece.*

VOL. II.

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY. *Frontispiece.*

LETTERS

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE

REIGN OF WILLIAM III.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 24, 1696.

I was yesterday with Sir John Fenwick,* and took his information in writing, which I send your Grace a copy of.† The Lords Justices met at ten this morning, and had it read to them, upon which they have put off the trial, without appointing any other time for it, which they leave now to the King, and have ordered a copy of the information to be sent to the King, which I shall enclose to my Lord Portland, as supposing it ought to be so.

Their Excellencies observed from this paper that

* Sir John Fenwick, an unscrupulous and determined adherent of the exiled House of Stuart. He was engaged in a conspiracy for the assassination of William III., for some particulars regarding which see the introduction. He was a man of good family in Northumberland, and married Lady Mary Howard, daughter of Charles, first Earl of Carlisle.

† This examination was taken under the authority of the Lords Justices.

Peter Cooke* had not dealt very ingenuously both as to Morley, Crawford,† and some other people, which will be obvious to your Grace upon reading Sir John's paper; and therefore they don't intend his pardon shall proceed. I was directed to acquaint Sir John, as I have done, that their Excellencies had put off his trial, seeing some reason for it by the account now sent them. But that it would concern him to recollect himself, as to any thing he had not yet told, and when he had any thing more to acquaint them with, I should attend him to receive it.

Mrs. Scott came to me last night. Your Grace made a right guess at her business, that it was in relation to Smith.‡ What she knew was but by hearsay from one Read, who I desired might be sent to me. He came this morning; he seems to

* I believe the son of Sir Miles Cooke. He was implicated in this plot, and condemned but not executed.

† Gentlemen accused of participating in the conspiracy. The latter a member of the House of Commons.

‡ Mathew Smith, nephew to Sir Wm. Perkins, or Parkyns, who was executed for the plot to assassinate the King. This Smith, still called Captain Smith, had been an officer in William's service, but had been discharged, and joined the Jacobite party, to which his uncle belonged. Disgusted, as he asserted, by the horrible designs of that body, he left them, and became a needy and not very trustworthy informer against his former friends. He obtained money at times from the Duke of Shrewsbury, and had some correspondence with him and Vernon, who at this time appears to have been acting as under Secretary of State. He asserted, however, that they treated him with ingratitude, and as soon as rumours got abroad of Sir John Fenwick's accusation of the Duke, he endeavoured, either from revenge or cupidity, to give some consistency to the charge of that traitor; and beyond doubt was prompted by the inconsistent Earl of Monmouth, who at this time laboured hard for the destruction of Shrewsbury and Marlborough, and some others, of whom he entertained a jealous hatred.

be an ordinary sort of man, and he tells me he has heard him threaten what he would do against your Grace, and I am likewise to have a share of it.

Mrs. Scott was telling me he had printed a book; but this man says he has only drawn up three copies of all the letters he either writ or received, and has had them well bound up, and one, he says, is to be presented to the King. Perhaps he may prate in the next company, as if he intended the other two for the two Houses. He tells this man he is to have 6000*l.* when the King returns; and sometimes, he says, he is to be an earl. But as to fact, this man says there is somebody that furnishes him with money, for it is pretty plentiful with him of late, and Read has heard he has been supported by the Earl of Monmouth's* steward, and that he has been at Parson's Green, and sometimes lodges that way out of town; but he said he would be more particularly informed about it.

He tells me, likewise, that there is one Mrs. Mortimer, widow of the King's confectioner, who is one of Smith's confederates; and others, whose names he can't yet learn, but promises to do it. I encouraged him to it in general terms, as going through with what I thought well intended by him, rather than that it was in itself necessary or of any consequence. The man does rightly understand Smith, and knows his qualities of being an impudent, vain, and lying coxcomb.

* Afterwards known better by the name of Peterborough.

By the Dutch post, the King* orders the Dutch list for the winter squadron to be communicated to the Admiralty, and that they be told the Dutch have orders to act in concert with us, and have a sufficient supply of provisions. But he says nothing whether Shovel shall go to Cadiz or not.

De Bart† has got in by having his ships *cleaner* than ours; but he has neither brought in their trade nor molested ours, so that almost in sight of him the Dutch have got eleven East India ships home, and we three.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

26th of Sept. 1696.

A Dutch post arrived this afternoon, but it brought no letters for your Grace, either from the King or my Lord Portland.

I have taken a copy of the Paris letter of the 28th that mentions the squadron they have abroad. I shall keep it for the Lords Justices, but don't yet send it to the Admiralty, it being more capable to amuse than instruct them, since it mentions as if most of their preparations were for the West Indies.

Mr. Hill gives your Grace a surprising account of the settling the succession of the Spanish mo-

* William III. was then in Holland.

† The famous French seaman, Jean Bart.

narchy *. The ambassador's secretary came to me this evening, being sent, as he says, to prevent any false reports being spread of that King's condition of health, or about his will and testament, which he says is not yet made. That the King had been pressed to it, but the danger decreasing, the thoughts of it were laid aside.

I believe there was no mention of it in the letters he produced to me of the 15th and 16th, which are some days' fresher than Mr. Hill's. But the great crisis of his distemper was before, and there was such a dryness upon him at that time, that they had reason to doubt whether he could hold out long.

He owns the Marquis de Oropesa being sent for, and that he was admitted to the King. What faction he is of, I know not, but I suppose the French, and that the Queen's party got him removed.†

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

28th and 29th of Sept., 1696.

I received this day the honour of your Grace's letter of the 27th inst., and set about the answering

* For several years before the death of Charles II. of Spain, his declining health and want of heirs rendered the probable succession to the throne of Spain and the immense territories thereunto attached, one of the most important considerations of the day.

† Oropesa was then Count, he had been driven from the ministry by Count Melgar, but was about this time recalled; and coalescing with Melgar and the Austrian party, was made President of Castile.

it immediately as far as I can, at present not knowing how much time will be left me for the dispatch of what may happen to-morrow.

Sir John Fenwick referring so far to his former paper* as to explain what was there left obscure, he thought necessary for satisfying the King and the Lords Justices of his sincerity. But I hope the consequence your grace mentions may be avoided, for this paper is not yet in form, Sir John not having signed it, and it is no better than a *brouillon.* When his Majesty, therefore, shall think fit, it may be fair drawn up to be signed, without any of the referring clauses which signify nothing to the substance of the information, and it may be so much the easier done, as Sir John has not yet any copy of what he dictated, and though he desired it, the Lords did not think fit he should have it.

I find already that people expect to hear of Sir John's confession in Parliament, since they cannot do it out of it. There are so many concurring motives to bring it thither, that it will hardly be avoidable; and one thing will mainly promote it, which is that every one takes a liberty at guessing who are accused, and by that means more comes to be talked of than is fitting, and some of those, in all probability, will, for their own vindication, press

* Sent to the King at the Hague, by the Duke of Devonshire. This paper charged the Duke of Shrewsbury with treason, and as it was in doubt at this time whether that paper was ever to be made public or not, the Duke was anxious to avoid all reference to it, without an absolute necessity. The sentence to which this note is appended is not clear, but is accurately printed.

the examination of this matter, and the Paliament is not like to withstand such a gratification.

The Bishop of Rochester is named for one, in public coffee-houses, and the first report is fathered upon Porter*. One tells me to-night that there is a talk too of my Lord Marlborough: and God knows how many more; and this will still increase until there are some taken up, that people may know where to fix again, which makes me think it necessary that a gentleman who is named should be taken up, though I doubt it will not be done or ought not before the King comes, and then perhaps he will not be found.† For I have reason to believe that notice has been sent to them, since Chancy came to me from one of them on Thursday last, and said he had received a letter from an unknown hand the night before, cautioning him to get out of the way, but he chose rather to surrender himself, if there were occasion.

All I could say to it was, that this looked like a way of pumping me, which was not proper; but I humbly conceive, that if one of Sir John's intimates were brought to confirm his testimony, the discovery would proceed upon a right foot, and give a general satisfaction.

* Captain Porter, one of the principal witnesses in regard to the conspiracy for assassinating the King.

† This evidently alludes to some particular person, but I know not whom. Perhaps Lord Monmouth, as we find in a letter from Lord Somers that he went into the most extravagant passion on the rumour of Fenwick having accused him. It might, however, refer to the Earl of Aylesbury.

Mrs. Scott was with me to-day, and she has seen Read, but he can make no further progress in it till the gentleman comes to town, who, they hear, is somewhere towards Twickenham.

I have read over his letters that were in your Grace's escritoire, and have added two others of his letters to your Grace. The more I see of them the more I am satisfied he will only be able to discover his own arrogance and ignorance, in what he now pretends to be so well informed of.

The Lords Justices sat this morning, but they were only three. My Lord Godolphin* went to Newmarket on Saturday, and my Lord Chamberlain went to Knowle this morning, and they are not like to be more for holding the Council on Thursday: my Lord Steward† intending for Newmarket to-morrow, and from thence to Derbyshire, and will not return under a fortnight. So they resolved not to be at the Council which was held this afternoon, about the returns from the country, and on Thursday they will come thither, be their number as it will.

I dont hear my Lord Privy Seal‡ is expected till next week. All their Excellencies did to-day was to send the King's directions to the Admiralty about conferring with Albemarle, to whom notice is likewise given.

The Lord Chancellor Porter's letter to your

* First Lord of the Treasury. † Duke of Devonshire.
‡ Earl of Pembroke.

Grace was read to them, but my Lord Keeper would hardly have thought of sending a copy to the King, but that he believed your Grace might have made some mention of it to Mr. Blathwayte, for he don't think much is to be built upon a single opinion, when those Justices are especially required to give a joint opinion upon the particulars proposed to them. And he did not like the Chancellor being so solicitous for a bill to confirm the Articles of Limerick, which he thinks has an eye to himself, that he may not be questioned for the injunctions he has ordered in favour of such as were comprehended within those articles.

I am ordered, however, to send it, and at the same time to let Mr. Blathwayte know that their Excellencies forbear to give any opinion upon this letter, being in expectation to hear from the three Justices in answer to what they wrote to them.

Dr. Newton* brought the examination of Hebison and his wife, who accuse one Cole, a goldsmith in Lombard Street, but he is fled; and they mention one Harris of the Exchequer, as concerned in helping off their clipped money. But the information chiefly runs against St. Leger, Dun, and Jack Gibbons, for their practices in helping away clippers and bringing them to compositions, under the colour of apprehending them. The Lords were desirous they

* Afterwards Sir Isaac Newton. This refers to the investigations then made into the system of deteriorating the coin, which had been carried to an extraordinary length.

should all be secured, and it was thought fittest to be done by a secretary's warrant. But Sir William Trumbull* has excused himself, as being a matter not belonging to him.

Atkinson and White have both reprieves for a longer time, but the warrants are fain to be sent to Knowle to get a fourth hand.

My Lord Keeper spoke to me to-day about Smith, and I told him all his story as far as I remembered it, and under what management he was supposed to be at present. I suppose he will write to your Grace his thoughts of it.

It is my Lord's intention to come to his chamber in Whitehall, before the Council meets on Thursday, and then intends to look over Sir John Fenwick's paper with what Cook has formerly writ.

My Lord Steward had another copy of Monsieur De Placque's letters. I have given it to Mr. Yaird to extract what he thinks proper for the Admiralty.

I had acquainted Sir Basil Dixwell, last night, by letter, with your Grace's opinion, that Thompson should defer his journey.

I have already informed your Grace that the King's convoy sailed on Thursday, though I now believe it was rather Friday.

There is no news here, except the Bishop of Chichester's death, who broke his leg in getting out of his coach, when the coachman was thrown and the

* Second Secretary of State.

horses going on. His leg was cut off, and he did not long survive it.

The Council had this evening before them the returns from Suffolk; there are some removed, but who they are I know not.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Whitehall, 1st October, 1696.

* * * * *

I can't but take notice again how the reports increase concerning persons, supposed to be accused by Sir John Fenwick, of all orders and degrees, friends and enemies to the Government, as if that were a contest of parties, who should name most of those they don't affect.

Mr. Montague* mentioned it to me to-day with great concern. He did not speak out who he meant it of; but I found him scandalized at reports that he said came from the Duchess of Norfolk and others of that stamp, but Mr. Pulteney came out with it, and said he heard your Grace was one named by Sir John, but I could not learn his author.

Another told me your Grace, my Lord Godolphin, and Lord Marlborough were named, and they said it came from Mackintosh, a Jacobite Scotch parson, and that he had it from Captain Waugh,

* Chancellor of the Exchequer.

who was lately tried, so that your Grace may judge from what fountain these discourses spring.

The Earl of Rochester and his brother, are likewise talked of, but nobody more than the Earl of Monmouth, and nobody knows whither this extravagance will run, or what will be the consequence of it.

My Lord Steward went out of town yesterday morning, and by what I hear he don't intend to be in town again till the 24th, or 26th of this month, unless, as he says, the King sends for him, which is another unaccountable step he is making.*

Some hot-headed citizens delivered in a strange paper at the meeting of the Common Hall on Tuesday last, in order to the bringing the examination of the plot into Parliament. They have since printed it. I send it enclosed.

I am told it is the contrivance of Harris, Merriall, and Briscoe, who were all three the forward men in opposing the Court of Aldermen, and were the adherers in the controversy whether fines should be taken for sheriffs. Briscoe is the same that set on foot the land-bank, and how far he has been admitted into other conversations with that sort of

* The Duke of Devonshire, Lord High Steward, was censured with some acrimony by Bentinck, Earl of Portland, for the manner in which he had conducted that part of the business of Sir John Fenwick which had passed through his hands. In some of his letters, Portland openly accuses him of having giving admission to various persons wishing to communicate with Fenwick without proper discrimination. It is probable, therefore, that he and the Court were mutually discontented with each other at this time. It is very evident that if proper care had been taken the reports which at this time agitated all London, would not have made their way to the public from the manufactory which was established in the will of Sir John Fenwick.

men I know not. But Mr. Stanley tells me there is a set of Whigs who whisper it about, and he has met with it in several places. Sir John Fenwick has accused two of the Lords Justices whom they name, and therefore his informations are to be stifled, and the paper now published is intended as a reflection on the Administration for suppressing discoveries offered to them.

Monsieur Blancard and I having been pretty familiar of late, and he telling me in confidence what discourses the Earl of Monmouth has held concerning my Lord Godolphin, I desired him to take an an occasion, by the bye, to know what that Lord's notions were with respect to your Grace.

He has been with me this morning, and tells me the same thing I had formerly heard from him, that he speaks of you with esteem, only he looks upon you as *mené par le nez* by the Lord he throws out all his suspicions upon.* But he spoke with great vehemence and concern in relation to Sir John Fenwick, and the discourses about town of the persons he is said to have accused, and that he is named in the number. He finds great fault with the management of it that this should only be committed to me—that I should be thought fit to be sent to Newgate, and the Lords to rely on such a report as I should bring them, whereas it would have been proper for Sir William Trumbull to be entrusted in it, or that Sir John Fenwick should have been personally brought before the Lords Justices or the

* Probably Lord Sunderland.

Council; and he has an imagination that the attempt made upon him, near Chelsea Hospital, was more than a design to rob him.

I have told my Lord Keeper* part of what I have heard of both kinds, his Lordship sending for me into his chamber, where he read over Sir John Fenwick's paper, and took the account of Cook's. There being only two of the Lords Justices in town, they did not think it proper to meet to-night, and have ordered that the Admiralty have notice to be with them to-morrow, my Lord Chamberlain, if not, my Lord Privy Seal to be expected in the meantime.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 8th, 1696.

I am extremely concerned for the unlucky accident that has befallen your Grace, which could scarce have happened in a more improper time.† My Lord Portland was in town when I received your Grace's letter, and I immediately acquainted him with it, who hopes your Grace will not be long hindered from coming up; and as soon as he had dined, he would go to Kensington, and give his Majesty an account of what has detained you.

I was at Kensington yesterday, among the crowd of those that thronged to kiss the King's hand.

* Afterwards the famous Lord Somers.

† A fall from his horse in hunting which he never fully recovered.

However, his Majesty enquired for your Grace, and when you would be here, and whether I had given you notice of his coming.

I believe the meeting of the council has been deferred in expectation of your arrival. It happens too, that my Lord Keeper has not yet seen the King, being taken ill with a violent cold on Tuesday last, which obliges him to keep at home for a few days.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 12th, 1696.

I am sorry to find your Grace make such melancholy reflections, in a matter that I can't think will any way be to your prejudice. It is not to be imagined that Sir John Fenwick, loading those entrusted by the King with his hear-says, shall make any further impressions, than to shew the malice of the party in engaging him to suppress what he must needs know, and to make a merit of what he don't know. When your Grace considers what has been buzzed into people's ears, and how unable he is to make it out, perhaps you may be of opinion that nothing will be more inconvenient, or create a greater uneasiness to yourself, than the keeping this matter in such a smothering condition, that serves only to augment jealousies, without giving any opportunity to refute them.

It were of all things to be wished, the King would

begin, with speaking to Sir John Fenwick himself, to see what grounds he has for his information. It is very likely my Lord Keeper will press it; but he was of opinion the King would be willing to avoid it if he could. But I don't see there can be any referring him to other people, till he has been with the King. As to his last confession, which your Grace thinks is of matters remitted by the act of grace, if I mistake not, all correspondence with France is excepted, or otherwise Hunt's evidence against my Lord Aylesbury would have signified nothing.

My Lord Sunderland came to town on Wednesday last; he has often sent to enquire after your Grace. He called at the office on Saturday, and was very uneasy that you were not come to town, saying it was a great stop to their business. Mr. Russell* is not yet come up, which I know not the reason of. I hear he went to Wooburn lately.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 13th, 1696.

Allen, the messenger, came hither last night, but he had left his letter at Kensington. I had an opportunity to speak to my Lord Portland yester-

* Admiral Russell, first Lord of the Admiralty, a man of distinguished talents, but, a covetous and tenacious character.

day, in the afternoon, and took an occasion to ask him about Sir John Fenwick, whether his Majesty had any intention of seeing him, on account of some reserves that he had to impart only to his Majesty. I could go no further in it than to say, that the discourses about town, which were filled with reflections on persons entrusted by the King, must needs make those uneasy who found themselves hinted at; and it would be fit that some way or other were taken to see what was in it, and the rather, since it might be made a parliamentary enquiry.

I perceived by his answer, his Majesty had considered it, but thought the sending for Sir John Fenwick would rather increase and authorise those reports than otherwise, and for receiving any satisfaction from Sir John Fenwick, he expected none; but withal said it was a point fit to discourse with your Grace upon, and thought it mighty unlucky that you were not here.

He said, however, he would speak to my Lord Keeper, and bid me come next morning to Kensington, and he would think upon what he should write to your Grace. I went thither this morning, and carried my papers with me, and followed my Lord to the levee, but had no opportunity given me to present my papers. His Lordship, I found, was taken up with my Lord Chief Justice Holt, who was brought to the King, and has obtained the Auditor's place of the Customs for his brother. Whether he came upon any other account I know

not, but I had an imagination then, as if he were to be sent to Sir John Fenwick. All my Lord Portland told me was, he would see my Lord Keeper that day, and he would speak with me afterwards, whereupon I thought it best to be a little before hand with my Lord Keeper, to whom I communicated so much of your letter, as expressed what your Grace's thoughts were about Sir John Fenwick's being sent for.

It put him at ease to know them, being before in great doubt how he was to behave himself as to that point. And he seemed to join with your Grace in opinion, since there had been so much baseness in sending this matter slyly abroad, and he wished somebody might be by when the King sent for him, to take his answers in writing, that they might not be varied from afterwards.

My Lord Portland sent for me again this evening, to tell me he was writing to your Grace, having seen my Lord Keeper. I perceived neither of them had communicated to one another what they knew of that matter, but took notice only of general reports. Your Grace will understand from themselves, what their opinions are, but my Lord wished very heartily that your Grace was in a condition to come to town, thinking it extremely necessary if it were possible, and therefore pressed what my Lord Sunderland proposed to me in the morning, that a litter should be sent for your Grace, hoping you may be better able to bear that than a coach.

I told my Lord then I would ask Sir Thomas Millington,* whether you might venture yourself in such a carriage, and I have been twice at his house, but he was from home. However, I thought it must be complied with, were it only to obviate another malicious report I met with soon after the news of your Grace's fall, as if you were not in haste to come up. Thom Shorter has been about to enquire, but can hear of no litters at this end of the town, and to-morrow early he goes towards Cowlane, where, perhaps, they say he may meet with one, which if he does, it shall be dispatched, whether your Grace use it or not. My Lord Keeper sending me directions to the same effect, by the gentleman who brought his letter.

I was very glad to hear the remarks my Lord Portland made upon somebody,† he did not name, (and I thought there was no need of it), who was very busy in blowing these coals. But I hope in God he will never warm himself by the heat he would raise. It is pretty visible here is an imposthume gathering, and I don't know it is best to bring it to a head, and when it breaks, one shall be the better for it.‡

* For many years one of the most famous physicians of the metropolis, in the reigns of Charles, James, and William.

† Lord Monmouth.

‡ This letter was followed two days after by letters from Lord Keeper Somers, and the Earl of Sunderland, both urging the Duke to return instantly to London, and evidently agreeing in opinion with Vernon, that the Duke's absence afforded occasion for his enemies to insinuate that he was afraid to face Sir John Fenwick.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

15th of October, 1696.

I received yesterday the honour of your Grace's letter of the 12th, and expect the return of Morris, the messenger, by whom I expect to hear that your Grace is on the mending hand.

I acquainted you by last post, that I could not avoid sending down a horse litter, which went away yesterday at noon, and will arrive sooner than this letter. I hope your Grace will have no occasion for such an unusual carriage, but all who wish you well, would be glad you were well.

The parliament men come but slowly to town, so that I question whether the King will make his speech on Tuesday, but rather suffer the House to adjourn for two or three days, to allow the members time to come up.

I saw my Lord Coningsby this morning, who tells me, that finding how much people are set upon having Sir John Fenwick before the Parliament, and that it is not to be avoided, though it should be thought inconvenient, it came into his head, that it was for the King's service, he should make the advances himself, and mention it in his speech, somewhere toward the latter end, which he thinks will prevent its being called for, in the first place to the disturbance of matters of greater moment, and then it will come on only in its course, after the intentions of the House are seen upon the chief

points laid before them, and by that means it may be better managed to the King's satisfaction. He is so well persuaded he is right in his notion, that he proposed it to my Lord Portland yesterday before the King went, who referred him to my Lord Keeper, and my Lord Sunderland. He had not seen them, but was going to them.

Sir James Forbes came out with a thing yesterday, which shews the communications have been very particular of Sir John Fenwick's confessions, if there have not been copies handed about. He says people are inquisitive to know who they were that sent my Lord Middleton away.

Mr. Russell came up on Tuesday, and was with the King a considerable time that night.

Ben Overton tells me a surprising piece of news, which he says he has from the Vice-Admiral Aylmer's family, that Mr. Russell talks of going again into the country, not to come up till towards Christmas. But I hope these are women's mistakes.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

20th of October, 1696.

I received the honour of your Grace's letter of the 15th on Friday last, which mentioning your intentions of coming up, and I forbore to write last night. I am very sorry to find, by the letter that came this day, how unfit it was for your Grace to

expose yourself by undertaking so precipitate a journey. God grant it may not cost you too dear for gratifying the importunity of those who pressed your coming up contrary to the advice of your physician! I believe they will urge that no further, but all other considerations will be allowed to give way to that of health and ability.

I have acquainted my Lord Portland with your condition, who is concerned at it, and will make it known to the King.

I went to Sir Thomas Millington, who hearing how you were, hardly expected it would be otherwise, thinking nothing could be more improper for you, than this attempt you have made. From thence I went to my Lord Keeper, who very much wished your Grace could have been (brought up), but not with so much hazard to yourself.

His Lordship is under great perplexity, as to what he should resolve in himself, and inculcate into others, in relation to Sir John Fenwick's information, whether it should be kept back or brought on, and if so, in what manner, is a point much agitated now at Kensington. And my Lord Keeper thinks if he could have spoken with your Grace, it would soon have been determined, that you would have either acquiesced in his opinion, or he would go over to yours. But he is now under greater *error*,* as not being willing to make a decisive judgment in a

* This word is nearly illegible. It appears to be *error*; but I doubt that it was so intended to be read.

matter of such concern to you, without knowing how you would approve of it.

If it were his own case, and left to him to order it as he would, I think he would not be solicitous what enquiry it underwent, as he thinks the House will be possessed of it, whether it be desirable or not, and in that case, it were better to swim with the stream, than propose stemming it, as that he cannot imagine there should be a prevailing party in the House to admit of such an accusation from one under these circumstances. But rather, that they will see of what consequence it is not to leave the friends of the government to be blasted and destroyed by the enemies of it, and be filled with indignation, that any guilty persons shall presume to make use of those methods to wound the innocent. In the so tolerating whereof, they can't but see that the most faithful and useful subjects must be ravished from the service of the kingdom, whenever a plotter, to save himself, raises a lie on them, and because it can be neither proved nor disproved, further than it is confuted by all the other actions of one's life, it must be with scorn rejected, and declared a base calumny.

I find the King had broke the matter to Mr. Russell,* on Friday last, who it seems had heard what had been said of others, but did not know before he was himself concerned; and my Lord Portland told me it was left to him and your Grace to

* Admiral Russell.

consider whether, and how you would have this matter taken notice of.

Mr. Russell was with my Lord Keeper this afternoon, and after I had left them together some time, I was called in, and they both told me what my Lord had hinted before, that it was very necessary I should wait on you to receive your directions. But they would let a day more pass, and they would consider a little further what instructions I should take with me, and accordingly I am appointed to attend them to-morrow evening.

They thought it likewise very necessary that Sir Thomas Millington should make your Grace a visit, both as your condition seemed to require it, and as it would not sound well in the world your Grace should be so ill and not have all the shew of help that people expect, and my going with him would make it less observable.

Whereupon I endeavoured to find Sir Thomas Millington to propose it to him, but he was from home; your Grace not intending to write again to-morrow will give me another opportunity for it, and Sir Thomas will better judge what necessity there is for it. But if he has a mind to excuse the journey, and it be resolved I should go, I think of taking Dr. Vernon's son along with me, who was bred up under Hobbs. He will be glad of such an opportunity to see his father, and whether he will be useful to your Grace or not, it will look like carrying down a remedy.

I will see Mr. Russell to-morrow morning to know whether my journey is like to hold for the next day, and accordingly I will provide myself a coach. In the meantime I pray heartily for your Grace's recovery, and that you may be under no uneasiness of mind, which, I trust in God, there is no occasion for.*

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

24th of October, 1696.

Hayward the messenger overtook me a little before I came to Uxbridge and brought me your Grace's letter. I got to Kensington pretty early this morning, before the King went for Richmond, and delivered the letters that were for the King and my Lord Portland.

I saw my Lord first, who was very glad your Grace was in a more hopeful way of recovery; he wished your letter had not been so doubtful in that part that gives the reasons of your offering to resign the seals, as if the same subsisted still; he is very confident that nothing Sir John Fenwick has said can give the least occasion for it, but that your Grace would be fully vindicated in the proper time, and that he was more satisfied of it since I went, as were also my Lord Keeper and my Lord Sunderland, to whom he referred for the explaining it.

* Mr. Vernon went to visit the Duke on the following day, bearing letters from the Lord Keeper Somers and the Earl of Sunderland.

I saw the King at his levee, who immediately called me to him, and asked several questions about your health. He does not expect you should come up till you can do it with safety; but is satisfied your Grace will come as soon you are able.

I presented then your Grace's letter, and perhaps might afterwards have been sent for into the closet, but the King was to go a hunting, and had appointed my Lord Godolphin an audience, who was with him above half an hour.

My Lord Godolphin, seeing me in the bed-chamber, enquired how your Grace did, and I took the occasion to let him know how necessary it was your Grace should be furnished with some ready money on account of secret service. He would not own that Sir William Trumbull had more than order, which is not yet turned into money; but he bid me send him a note to the Treasury on Monday of what your Grace demanded, which I shall not fail to do, and shall endeavour likewise to speak with Mr. Montague, who I hear, is like to stand there, at least within a little time upon the surer footing.

I have delivered your Grace's other letters to my Lord Keeper and Lord Sunderland, who were both at my Lord Keeper's at a meeting with Mr. Montague and Mr. Smith,* and some other members of Parliament.

My Lord Keeper first came out to me, and besides your letter, he read the paper you were pleased to

* One of the Lords of the Treasury.

send me, and was very much confirmed in his opinion by your Grace's concurrence, and was glad to find himself at liberty to communicate of this matter, with such as were fit to be entrusted, and he did not doubt but they should order it so, as to be masters of it whenever it came into the House. That he had already written to my Lord Wharton to come up, telling him it was for a business that concerned your Grace and Mr. Russell, which he thought would be the most prevailing motives he could use to make him hasten his journey. He hoped he would be here this evening, and then they would have a meeting with Mr. Russell, and resolve what was to be done, and consider whom else they would take into it at first, and to whom they would further communicate it afterwards.

I gave my Lord Sunderland his letter at that place, and attended him again in the afternoon as he directed. He spoke to the same effect as my Lord Keeper, and would have your Grace rely upon it, that this matter will go off to your honour and satisfaction. He was always inclined to stave off its being mentioned in Parliament, at least till the King's business were pretty well over. And these two or three days passed, strengthened him in that opinion. He thinking the Whigs would be governable in it, and that the other would never attempt it. But he has heard lately of eight or ten hot men, who will not be satisfied if it were not brought on, and he was now intent upon considering how it

should be done, and they only wanted my Lord Wharton to take the last resolutions.

I wish therefore, his Lordship were here, for if I were to deliver my opinion, I think I should be one of the hot-headed men, who wish this matter were over. The House runs smoothly on now, and the party who are reflected on, bear the sway at present. I know not how it will be, when they come to be gravelled with finding out ways and means to make good their votes, and there it is their opposers will unite their strength and appear formidable.

It is the natural place for such an enquiry to precede money matters, and as it will find a quick despatch now, so I don't know but it may advantage the King's business, and this party having asserted their fidelity to this government, will think themselves more obliged to make it good in contending for the supplies, and assume to themselves the honour of it.

I fear there is a reflection in delays, since few will understand the reason of it, and one would not have an imputation lie longer upon one than one need must.

I have been likewise with Mr. Russell, and shewed him your Grace's paper, as I did the other Lords: he took the more particular notice of the last paragraph, recommending it to be considered how this matter should be introduced. He thought it was capable of being improved, so that the King might be moved to make it some way or other

rightly understood, what credit he gave to Sir John's paper, and of what ill consequence he thought it, that men should hope to save themselves by defamations.

He believed the Council the most proper place, both as they were sworn to secrecy and to give faithful advice. He wished my Lord Steward might be present when the King took notice of it, and that the paper might be laid before them for their examining whether hearsays were reasons for deferring his trial. This he spoke with some resentment against my Lord Steward,* but said he would confer with my Lord Keeper this evening, and if he could find him, he would send for me thither, that your Grace might have an account of the result; he has since sent me word, that he thrice attempted to find my Lord Keeper, but was told he was abroad. He will try it again to-morrow. My Lord Sunderland likewise said that part should be considered.

As to my Lord Monmouth, I understand, both by my Lord Portland and Lord Sunderland, that he has been heaving at this wheel, with a direct opposition to my Lord Godolphin, and not much concerning himself, who else was bespattered.† But my Lord Keeper thinks there is no doubt of the King's

* The Duke of Devonshire, who had first examined Fenwick in prison.

† There can be little doubt from his after conduct, that his enmity was at this time scarcely less towards Shrewsbury and Russell, as is made manifest by the paper of suggestions drawn up by him for Fenwick's defence.

keeping him in temper, his Majesty having taken some pains in it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

27th of October, 1696.

I don't know that the House of Commons ever acted with greater concert than they do at present. So that I hope this is a very proper time to bring any matter before them one would wish success to.

They meet almost every night, and settle what they will propose, and how manage it. They did so last night to near the number of fifty, and agreed to all the resolutions that were taken this day about the corn, so that it went on smoothly, notwithstanding Seymour, Temple, and Harley, would have offered some rubs.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

27th of October, 1696.

My Lord Wharton came to town yesterday, and I am glad to hear by him, he looks on your Grace as on the mending hand. He went last night to a meeting at my Lord Keeper's, where were besides, the Earl of Sunderland, Lord Edward Russell, Mr. Montague, and Mr. Felton.

Mr. Russell was not there; I suppose it was by reason he had advice of his brother's death, which

your Grace has an account of in the enclosed from Mr. Cranfield.

My Lord Sunderland directed me to come to that meeting, and bring the paper with me your Grace put into my hands, which I read to them, except the paragraph about quitting, and they entered into the debate of the matter. It seemed to be agreed there was a necessity of bringing it into Parliament, and that it ought not to be too long delayed, and they thought it much more advisable to bring it before the Commons than the Lords.

It was declared the King was disposed to do whatever should be thought best for the vindication of your Grace and Mr. Russell. But I perceive he was not alike concerned to discredit the paper on other accounts.* But it was likewise hinted, that whatever opinion the King might have of some other particulars mentioned in the paper, there was no belief to be built upon Sir John's relating them, since it would not be proper or necessary to be distinguishing, where he should be credited or where not. But for his apparent falsities, the whole should be regretted, and pass only for a laid contrivance premeditated against such an occasion.

My Lord Sunderland still inclined to have it brought into the House by Mr. Russell, and that some of the Privy Council should then be ready to

* When we consider who were the persons principally implicated, Godolphin, Lord Marlborough, and others, this paragraph acquires another kind of interest than appears upon the mere surface.

declare how dissatisfied the King was with this information, and assured of the fidelity of your Grace and Mr. Russell; and as it had made no other impressions upon him, than to look upon it as a designed piece of malice, both against the persons accused and the government, the author ought to be treated accordingly.

Mr. Montague saying the thing was new to him, and that it was of too great moment to deliver any sudden thoughts upon it, it was resolved to meet again on Wednesday, and they hoped then to be better prepared to come to some resolution.

In the meantime, I don't doubt but my Lord Wharton will advise with Mr. Russell, and know his sense of it. I saw him yesterday morning, and he was then of opinion, that the best way was for the King first to acquaint the Council with it, and to let them know why Fenwick's trial was so long deferred, contrary to his first intentions. If it shall be thought the most proper time for doing it when my Lord Steward is in town, I hear he is coming up, and will be here towards the end of the week.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

29th of October, 1696.

I send your Grace what papers I have relating to my Lord Bellew's business, (Mr. Blatchway had only the copies), my Lord Bellew promised me a

state of his case should accompany them, but it is not yet brought. I find it is upon what my Lady Orkney* said to them, they now press your Grace to write to the King, but I don't see what grounds they have to believe the King is prepared for it. They are told likewise to apply to my Lord Sunderland to second your Grace's letter, and I was advised with, whether it were proper. My sense of it was, your Grace so much wished the business done, that you could not be but willing they should engage any that can contribute towards it; they hope, therefore, my Lady Orkney will do that for them.

There was another meeting last night at my Lord Keeper's, of the same company, and Mr. Russell came to them. I hear that Mr. Russell proposed the first overture might be made at Council. That my Lord Sunderland was not so clear in it, till my Lord Wharton came into that opinion, and then my Lord undertook to propose it to the King, and seemed not to doubt but it might be so done.

Some of Sir John's friends are still so imprudent one among another, that he is safe enough by what he has said of those who were not of his party, and that he had accused a dozen such.

One of my Lord Sunderland's reasons why he would not bring this to Council, was that the disgust the Earls of Monmouth and Stamford had against

* Elizabeth Villiers, daughter of Sir Edward Villiers, Countess of Orkney, and mistress to William III.

one man* named, would set them so on an edge, as not to care who else were hurt by it; but Mr. Russell little regards that, as thinking they will either make the distinction themselves, or the world will do it for them; and he has no apprehensions of any avowed endeavours to the prejudice of either of your reputations, and all he cares to avoid is whispers and backbitings.

The enclosed will inform your Grace what the House did yesterday, where the opposition is weak at present, and while this union last, whatever is pre-resolved is sure to be carried. Some angry things are said by the other side, but they make no impression.

Mr. How thought to have warmed the House yesterday, by telling them how much his Majesty was misinformed, when he put into his speech that there were no disorders at home. He gave such an account of his county, as if it were all in tumults, and greater were to be feared, for which he was told since there was so little of it in other parts of the kingdom, they wished there were no fomenters of it there.

Lord Coningsby said all was quiet where he lived, but perhaps it was that the pamphlet writ to increase the mob against part of the members, was not come down.

Sir Edward Seymour took an occasion to say, that men of the best estates and interest in his county,

* Godolphin, beyond a doubt.

were not allowed to be in commissions of the peace. and lieutenancy, because of their votes in that House, Sloane would have called him to the bar for it, but was not seconded. Sir Rowland Gwynn said something in vindication of the Lord Lieutenant, that he advised with those he confided, to give commissions to such as were of unquestioned fidelity to the government.

The address of the House of Lords, here enclosed, was drawn by the Earl of Monmouth.

I was sent for to my Lord Keeper's this evening, but by Lord Wharton giving your Grace an account who was there, and what was said, I need say no more about it. They all believed the reading of the paper would draw on the curiosity to have Sir John before them, and some thought it might engage them in a long examination.

Mr. Russell expects no less than that the sending for Sir John will be the consequence of reading his paper, but if he has no more to offer than hearsays, it is not to be supposed they will spend much time about him. These gentlemen that were in such doubts, and supposed what might be the worst of the case, as thinking it of too great consequence to rest upon any easy belief, have only yet had some general report made them of the paper, but it is fit they should see it entire, to judge of the drift of it, and my Lord Wharton will endeavour to procure it for them by Saturday, and I am apt to believe they will not think the author worth sending for.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Oct. 31, 1696.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of Wednesday, and am much concerned that a new accident has happened to retard your case. I hope Mr. Arden will bring an account that it has been of no great consequence. If it had not fell out thus unluckily, your friends were ready to take up their former wishes that your Grace could have been here, for the matter is now coming to a crisis, and they hope to your entire satisfaction.

My Lord Keeper and my Lord Wharton giving your Grace an account of what was resolved in the morning at Mr. Russell's, and concluded this evening at my Lord Keeper's, it will be very needless to repeat it. Your Grace will know, by the last letters, who were present: there was only my Lord Sunderland and Mr. Felton omitted in the morning, not knowing whether the former might approve a sudden proposal of the King's being desired to send for Fenwick, and therefore they would first digest it well among themselves, and give it all due preparation, and it had the effect they could wish for, his Lordship coming into it with great readiness, and answering the King would do the like. And that which very much satisfied him was, that this was the most probable means to keep the House from sending for Sir John, which I perceive the King would of all things have avoided. And it will cer-

tainly shorten the work by keeping the debates strictly to the papers.

There was an addition this afternoon of Mr. Palmer and Mr. Chadwick. My Lord Sunderland procured the paper to be brought from Kensington, which, with the confession I took, and all the messages sent Sir John, and his answers to them were twice read, and the whole company were abundantly more satisfied than before. It being plain to them that this calumny is as much levelled against themselves as against your Grace and Mr. Russell, who are only named as the most remarkable, but it was intended to cast upon the party the odium both of the assassination and invasion, and that Crosby's negotiating was with them, and I don't doubt but they will treat upon it (in) that strain, and inculcate the same to all they shall think fit to impart it to hereafter. But till the examination is over on Monday, and that the King has imparted it to the Council on Thursday, it is enjoined as a great secret.

My Lord Sunderland and Mr. Russell both bid me excuse to your Grace their not writing by this post, and to acquaint you from them, they think the method can't be better settled than it is. And they have less to apprehend this way, whether Sir John prove ingenuous or not. The King will let him understand, as soon he appears, that his continuance in his prevarications was the worst way he can take for his own safety, and it is intended he shall be

sent for in such a manner as he shall not have advice given him, before he goes, or after his return, when he will be made a close prisoner, if there can be any such thing in England.

I send your Grace a letter from my Lord Portland, and with it one that he writ to me about the original paper, that it may be in a readiness to be produced at Council. I thought, indeed, your Grace had sent it to the King, but my Lord Keeper understands otherwise; for that reason, therefore, and the importance of these letters, I despatch a messenger to bring back your Grace's directions where that paper is to be found, and the keys that may help one to it. The examination may be well enough taken without it.

My Lord Steward is expected on Monday or Tuesday, and it is very well liked that he does not come sooner, since his being at the examination could not have been well avoided; it being proper for the Cabinet Council with the addition of the two Chief Justices,* the Attorney and Solicitor attending: and I don't know but he may likewise serve for the pretence to excuse the examinations having been deferred so long, and this his management is like to come home to him.

My Lord Archbishop and Lord Keeper met this morning to think of a report in Blackwall's business, which they will make only by word of mouth, if they find it pressing, that troublesome fellow preparing himself to go to the King, if not the Parliament.

* Holt and Treby.

What they have to represent will light hardest upon Brockett, and in the next place, Sawtell. This meeting was appointed two days ago, and my Lord Godolphin intended to be there; he came after twelve o'clock to excuse it, and told them he had been with the King to desire he might resign, and his Majesty was very easy and kind in granting it. He went soon after to Windsor.* This was no very great surprise to people, they having been prepared for it by what has been talked of this day or two. It was yesterday the news in the Jacobite Walk in the Park, that his Lordship not only quitted, but was turned out.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

November 3, 1696.

I have the honour of three of your Grace's letters to acknowledge, the first by Mr. Arden, who arrived on Sunday, the other by the post yesterday, and the last the messenger brought this morning. I shall

* Lord Godolphin had been a constant object of hatred to most of his colleagues in office; but the principal persons concerned in the endless manœuvres to drive him from the ministry, were Lord Sunderland and Lord Monmouth. Lord Somers, too, hated him with a goodly hatred, but does not seem to have greatly exerted himself to get rid of him. He however rejoices over his resignation in these terms. "Give me leave to say, that in my opinion my Lord Godolphin is directly tricked in this matter, and has suffered himself to be cozened into an offer to lay down, and is surprised in having his offer accepted; and I have reason to think sees it, and repents of it."

take out the paper when it is thought needful, and give Mr. Arden the closet key if he wants it.

I believed your Grace would not know what to think of the irresolutions on Thursday, but they had not then seen the papers, nor had they digested the matter in their own thoughts. But the expedient proposed for the King's taking the examination himself, resolved all their doubts, and obviated the difficulties, since it could not be imagined otherwise how the sending for him to the House could be avoided, and it was as hard to foresee, whether they should not run into greater intricacies, by such ambiguous answers as he may have prepared himself for; and that this was not judged amiss appears by his behaviour yesterday, when he was sent for to Kensington, which my Lord Keeper gives your Grace an account of.* It seems his lady was with him when he was sent for, and no doubt she gave him an account then, if she did it not sooner, that Goodman† was

* When the King desired him to give an entire and natural account of his whole knowledge, Fenwick, according to the Lord Keeper's account, said "He knew nothing but what was in his papers, and desired time till my Lord Steward came to town, insisting he was surprised. It was plainly told him that it was intended that he should not have time to prepare another paper; that what he knew before he still knew, and could tell if he would. In short, he refused to say any thing, even so much as to explain, or make certain his papers, or tell what he reserved for the King, unless it might be allowed to tell it to the King himself. This the King absolutely refused; and also told him that he would neither hear him or hear from him again; and so he was sent away."

† One of the witnesses against Fenwick, who is supposed to have been bought off.

gone off, for he had absented himself ever since Thursday; but it was not taken notice of till yesterday, his wife pretending every day she expected him home by night, and that he kept out of the way for avoiding duns, he being disappointed of money elsewhere. But now I hear she has this day removed her goods, so it is not to be doubted but he is debauched away. But I can't tell whether Sir John will have any great advantage by it, for I hope the House may be brought to that resentment of his practices, as to proceed against him by attainder, which is Mr. Smith's opinion. But there are two witnesses still left, if they think to make use of Cooke.* He is so shatter-brained a fellow, I know not whether it be advisable, but I think he would be a better witness now than before, since he remembered Charnock's message, but had quite lost the idea of Goodman's being present when it was discoursed of. The time of his reprieve is out on Friday next. The King has been prevailed with to prolong it another week, and I have orders to go to him again, which I am sorry for, it being impossible to make any thing out of him. I was there yesterday, but could not go far, he being taken with a megrim fit, and that gives me the trouble of going again on Thursday.

I waited on my Lord Keeper on Saturday to re-

* The son of Sir Miles Cooke, mentioned before, who was one of the conspirators condemned to death, but reprieved from time to time in hopes of obtaining evidence from him.

ceive his directions, whom I should go to from your Grace. He thought that might be best resolved on after Fenwick had been sent for. And since he thinks this evening should first be over when the members meet at his house, to hear what has passed in relation to Fenwick's examination, and to resolve what is next to be done. I am going thither, and will return to the office to send your Grace an account. I believe his Lordship has or will speak himself to the Marquis of Winchester, and as soon as he thinks it proper, I'll speak to the Speaker, Mr. Harley, Mr. Boyle, or whom else he pleases; and I am confident, there is none but will be glad of the occasion to pay this respect to your Grace.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

November 5th, 1696.

Your Grace's letter of the 2d instant was very reviving. I went this afternoon with Mr. Arden and Mr. Rowley, to Sir Thomas Millington, to hear the good news confirmed, and we find him much better satisfied now, than with the account your Grace last sent him. But he is hardly persuaded your Grace can come up so soon as the Oxford doctor judges you may, but let that be as it will, provided there be no lurking mischief to make the case doubtful.

Since there is so near a prospect of your Grace's coming up, Mr. Blackwell's * business may stay till then. I mentioned it to Mr. Blathwayte. Upon what your Grace writ before he found the King was for deferring it, till he had spoke with you, and therefore Mr. Blathwayte was not inclined to move it further, unless your Grace's distemper had made it uncertain when you could be here.

My Lady Bellew has called twice or thrice at the office for the letter you intend to send them, but is not pressing for it, till there may be no inconvenience in it. She is glad your Grace approves of applications being made to my Lord Sunderland. My Lady Orkney has the case given her, and expects every day an opportunity to put it into my Lord's hands, and to engage him to be hearty in it.

Sir Harry Farnese was with me this day, and he will take care that your Grace be neither called upon to pay the money now to be advanced, nor be pressed to determine upon the bargain. It is, your Grace, it seems, must sign the writing for prolonging the term, he will take care to get it prepared when it is necessary.

Mr. Arden is gone this afternoon to settle the matter with Sir Joseph Hern, as to the Bill of Exchange, which was sent on Tuesday.†

I suppose by this time the King has opened the matter to the Council, where I hear from one who

* So written here: Blackwall in other letters.

† Money was so scarce at this time, that thirty per cent. discount would often not procure cash for Exchequer tallies.

comes from thence, there was a great appearance. I carried the paper yesterday morning to Kensington, and gave it to my Lord Portland. The King sent Sir James Forbes this noon to my Lord Steward, to let him know he would speak with him before the Council sat. Though he came on Tuesday, he had not any opportunity to talk with him before, for on Tuesday night he was set down to his post letters.

He saw him yesterday morning in a crowd, as being the birth-day, and appointed him this morning, but before he got thither, the King was come to Whitehall chapel.

Before my Lord Steward went this evening, he came to Whitehall to fetch some papers, which I suppose must be the copies of the letters he writ to the King, or the notes of what Sir John said to him.

I was with my Lord Keeper this afternoon, who takes it for granted things will go on in the order they were concerted, and hopes the success will answer expectation. My Lord Wharton is of the same opinion, but it falls out very unluckily, that he is now ill, and confined to his bed. I was with him this evening, and he has a violent looseness upon him, and he bids me acquaint your Grace, that his greatest trouble is, that it should happen now. He has communicated this thing to Colonel Mordaunt, and bid him prepare himself in the best manner.

The House being to adjourn this day, I went to the Speaker yesterday, who had heard of the reports, and assures your Grace of all the respect he can shew you. I met with Sir Joseph Williamson

when the House was up, and I am confident he will act like one that is very desirous to pay you a service. I opened the business to Mr. Brydges before, and he has spoken to Mr. Russell about it. I thought it best to defer speaking of it to Mr. Harley and Mr. Boyle till to-morrow morning, when one may be sure it will be brought on, and then I shall mention it to others as from your Grace.

The King had no great satisfaction in the ball last night; he was in so many crowds, both at St. James's and Whitehall, that he was almost oppressed for want of air, and came back a little disordered to Kensington, but he was very well again to-day.

Mr. Felton just now comes from my Lord Sunderland's, and says the matter has been proposed at Council, where all agree it was a malicious and villanous contrivance. I don't doubt, therefore, but the House of Commons will be of the same opinion to-morrow.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.*

6th of November, 1696.

I thank God I can now send your Grace the joyful account of this day's success, that has been carried, as well according to my expectations as wishes.

* A part of this letter has been printed by Mr. Coxe.

Your Grace and your friends, and some others for your sakes, are not only honourably acquitted, but Sir John Fenwick is likewise to be proceeded against by bill of attainder, and this they have got by conveying away Goodman, and it has made your Grace's justification so much the more remarkable, as the House of Commons have had a proper occasion to shew their resentments against this man.

I refer your Grace to the enclosed copy of the proceedings, which I likewise send abroad, with some other additions to all your Grace corresponds with beyond sea; and it being late, I reserve myself to acquaint you with some other particulars.

Mr. Russell opened the matter pretty early in the morning, before the House filled, being necessitated to it, by reason they were going to a committee according to the order of the day, upon the new bill for the corn, but Mr. Secretary* was not then come with the papers, so the House went into that committee, and about an hour after, when the Secretary was come, and there was a competent number, Mr. Mordaunt broke up the Committee, and the Secretary acquainted the House with the orders he had from the King, to lay Fenwick's papers before the House, if they thought fit.

He told them the King's sense of them, and the little satisfaction he received when he examined Fenwick upon them, and that he looks upon his first paper, as intended only to raise distrust, and to

* Trumbull.

embroil his affairs, and he took the occasion to instance it only in relation to your Grace and Mr. Russell.

I suppose he spoke then by rule, and was not to say much to raise the House; and I observe he told them, he came lately into the knowledge of any thing that related to Sir John, as if the matter would have been mended, if more of it had passed through his hands.

The papers were then carried up and read, as well as the examination I took at Sir John's paper.

Mr. Russell then spoke handsomely and modestly for himself and your Grace, and put himself upon the justice of the House, to stand or fall by their opinions.

Crawford and Delaval spoke next, and denied the charge laid upon them, and that they had any knowledge of Sir John.

One Mr. Morley, a member, stood up next, who it seems is nephew to Dick Morley, one of the select number. He vindicated the loyalty of himself and father, and since his uncle was guilty of being in conspiracies, he renounced him for his part.

Mr. How took him up for being so easy in deserting his relation; he would do well to stay till the matter was proved, for if the papers were false as to any others named in it, it would not be true with respect to Mr. Morley. Mr. Smith and he fell to words about that, and How was very high in his answers, that since he was made a judge of what those papers

contained, he had a right to be satisfied as to the innocence or guilt of those he was to acquit or condemn.

Sir Thomas Littleton shewed very well that there might be a judgment made of what was fit to be believed or not, though spoke by the same man.

Sir Edward Seymour said, if a man were falsified in one thing, it was but just it should abate his credit as to the rest. The House not appearing to be in any great disposition to go far in that way, my Lord Coningsby very dexterously moved that Fenwick might be sent for, and prevented the others doing it.

Lord Cutts and Mr. Norris, who have been both zealous in this matter, were ordered to fetch him with a strong guard. The gross of what passed afterwards your Grace will please to see under Mr. Rowley's hands.

I spoke to Mr. Boyle early this morning at his lodgings. I spoke to Mr. Harley in the House, who came late, but I might as well have let them both alone; they were very well in their answers to me, but neither of them shewed any thing of it in the debate. Perhaps they thought it sufficient to be silent. But in the Bill of Attainder, Harley spoke against it, and both of them stayed together at that division. The Speaker, I think, did his part, and was ready to frame fit questions; he gives his service to your Grace.

Mr. Boyle would have made some kind of excuse to me, that he saw the business go on clearly, and

nobody said anything that needed an answer; but Mr. How's petulancy might have furnished occasion if he thought fit.

Sir Joseph Williamson said something, but less than I expected from him.

Montague, Smith, Littleton, Clarke, Boscawen, Onslow, Pelham, Mordaunt, Sir Robert Rich, Lord Coningsby, and some others, stood to it resolutely, more particularly the first, who did great right to Mr. Russell, your Grace and my Lord Marlborough by name, shewing how improbable this fiction was to any of you.

I should not have omitted Mr. Brydges, who employed both industry and judgment in the debate; How would fain have had the examination run upon the papers that he might have owned them, and gone about to prove them no matter which way. That which made the question stick pretty long, was that the whigs came but slowly into the censuring the whole paper; and that which drove on the others to make an end of it, was Mr. Montague's throwing out some words about the attainder which they would gladly have avoided, and so shewed themselves easier in this.

Temple first gave up Sir John for a calumniator, and that his paper was to be declared scandalous. Then the question was immediately stated, Lord Coningsby adding the tail to it, that this was a design to stifle the real plot. There was not above one or two cried no to it, but they kept their

strength for the attainder. Then Musgrave, Harcourt, Dyke, Temple, and Williams laid themselves out, but there was a great spirit against them of those that remained there, for the House was grown considerably thinner.

Seymour did not come in the afternoon, the Attorney did his part.

I hope your Grace will find your satisfaction in this day's proceedings, and I am confident the King's business will fare the better for it, though I hear he had great doubts upon him to the last about bringing it into the House. It has made no division among us, for those that approved the attainder are the same that oppose the supplies, and I hope their courage will grow still less.

* A Dutch post arrived this afternoon, but being all day at the House I can't get the extract ready for the Admiralty till to-morrow, and by that post your Grace shall have your letters. In the meantime I send you Mr. Hill's with a Dutch extract. What Mr. Hill writes about a design upon Ireland my Lord Portland was acquainted with last post, and seemed not to credit it, so that I know not whether I should alarm them with it.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 5th, and have sent my Lady Newbury word, the letter to the King is arrived. I suppose she will now prepare my Lord Sunderland that the letter may be delivered to the King on Sunday.

* This part of the letter is omitted by Coxe.

I observed in Labadie's book what your Grace takes notice of, and concluded he was entrusted with overlooking it, and the French author was to make him a compliment for it.

Sir Basil Dixwell is come to town, but as to Thompson, no late applications being made to him, and supposing the correspondence had taken another course, I got all the packets that were in his hands stopped, lest one might be censured for conveying French correspondence.

I have always taken care my Lord Villiers'* letter should be sent immediately to your Grace. I kept one of Mr. Hill's lately, only to shew my Lord Portland a paragraph of what care ought to be taken against private attempts or secret designs.

My Lord Wharton got abroad to-day, * * * * † illness, and has been very industrious among his acquaintance. He gives his service to your Grace, and wishes now, more than ever, that your health would permit you to hasten to town.

Mr. Guy's letter came too late for this day's service, and I began to suspect that you are to expect little from that whole party; I am glad therefore their power is no greater.

* Brother to the Mrs. Villiers before mentioned.

† Something wanting.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

November 10th, 1696.

I have the honour of your Grace's letters of the 7th and 8th, and am glad what is done has met with your approbation. The zeal and discretion of the House is indeed commendable in the conduct of this affair, and some people's sly traverses only serve to make it more remarkable.

Sir Edward Seymour vented yesterday as much malice as he could, saying he supposed Sir John might have injured some persons, but he could not be assured of it till he saw it proved, for men might alter their sentiments, and he instanced in the Lord Sandwich, Lord Manchester, Lord Anglesey, Lord Shaftsbury, and General Monk, that turned upon the government they once served, and brought in that they had opposed. Mr. Montague fell upon him for it. He owned he had friends there whom he would justify, however others abandoned theirs; and if they had a mind to have the falsity and design of the paper farther detected, they might be gratified in it.

Colonel Mordaunt played upon him for quoting Cæsar about saving the guilty persons rather than one innocent should suffer, and said a brother plotter spoke that in favour of Cethegus.

Mr. Harley* speaking that day as he had done before, against the Bill of Attainder, said he did it

* Afterwards so famous in the struggles of Queen Anne's reign.

not in consideration of Fenwick, who, he was satisfied, was the worst of men, and had falsely accused persons of the greatest merit, for whom he owned a particular respect; and he had a particular reason to think this a contrivance, for he had heard of the same thing before Sir John Fenwick was taken, and gave notice of it to those concerned.

He did not name your Grace, but I knew he meant you, he having told me the same thing before. I own I am now reconciled to him, and wish Mr. Boyle had done as much.

Jack Howe* has made amends with relation to your Grace for what he spoke very peevishly the other day in the quarrel.

Mr. Pulteney having prepared himself to cite precedents to justify the attainder, began with the commendation of your Grace, perhaps a little unseasonably. That matter being over, Mr. Howe, who lets nothing slip, owned his commendations were just, but very unnecessary, and applied the story of one who was eulogizing upon the praises of Hercules, and was answered, "Quis vita perevit?" He added likewise two or three things of his own, that shewed an esteem which was much for him, who sets himself to oppose whatever he thinks the Court is for.

I have given your Grace's thanks to the Speaker, who received it very well; and I have done the same to some other of the members that were the most active.

* Apparently the same person as the How before mentioned, though the name is spelled differently, which will be found frequently the case in these letters.

I have not seen my Lord Keeper since, but I don't see your Grace needs have the trouble of writing to any of the members, for I can supply that part till your Grace's coming up, which I hope will not be long, if the trial you made of the air agree with you.

I thought the House too complaisant this day in allowing Dighton to be Sir John Fenwick's solicitor, and to be alone with him as well as the counsel. I don't expect he should make a good use of it. But the majority seemed disposed to be very fair in the manner of the prosecution, to shew they did not affect severities against him but as the exigency of the case required it; and they thought the denying him the man he desired would have looked hard, and the difference would not have been great whether he had him or another.

The Committee appointed to inquire into the author and printer of the libel that was ordered to be burnt have not made their report, but they have found out that one Dover was the printer, and he has told them Grascomb, a non-juring parson, is the author.

This is he whom Weild mentions in his depositions to have been very busy in writing and publishing several libels. They have endeavoured to take him, but he is fled. They hoped they should have found Manley, a member of the House who is sent to the Tower, to have had hand in it. Whether it will appear so I know not, for they have not yet done with their inquiries.

Paul Foley declared himself to-day an open enemy of the Bank in a very long speech, and did not stick to lay the blame upon others that the Land Bank did not succeed.* He has a project in his head that is very inconceivable as yet, I know not what it will appear upon his explaining it. But it is to be a commission, not a bank, that shall discharge all they undertake with ready money, and not issue bills these two years, and that time he would have the Bank allowed to discharge their debts.

In the meantime I think he would have them tied up from giving out any more bills, and he says they will find their account in his scheme.

* The enormous expences of the war, the temporary shock given to public credit by the revolution, and the long tolerated nuisance of clipping and otherwise debasing the coin, had combined, with other causes, to reduce the revenue of the State, and diminish the circulation in a degree almost inconceivable, and the wisely devised measure of recoining the silver money and issuing it of just weight, while severe punishments were employed to check future debasement of the coin, was so unwisely executed, that the evil was doubled by the immense mass of silver taken out of the circulation at once. Under these circumstances, a person of the name of Chamberlain drew up the project of an establishment to be called the Land Bank. The proposal was seized by the Tory party, and the House of Commons resolved on this subject, that a fund, redeemable by Parliament, should be raised by subscriptions to amount in all to two millions four hundred and sixty-four thousand pounds; that this Bank should be restrained from lending money except upon landed security, or to the Government in the Exchequer; that no person concerned in the Bank of England could be a subscriber to the Land Bank, and *vice versâ*. The interest was to be provided for by the settlement of certain taxes, and the subscription was to be complete before the 1st of August 1696, or else the whole to determine and be void. Great expectations were raised, but the Bank of England of course opposed the measure; the subscriptions were not paid, and the Land Bank proved a signal failure, adding to the previous embarrassments of the country.

But whatever he has to propose, he will do well to make the advantages of it very plain and practicable, for otherwise the last year's experience has made men very sharp to distinguish chimeras from realities.

He put it a little unfair upon the Bank, that for lending the last 200,000*l.** they not only demanded but insisted upon 18,000*l.* My Lord Ranelagh did them more right. He owned that was their demand for their losses, but they had paid the money, and submitted their accounts to examination, which were not yet settled.

They had made some mistakes, and were willing to rectify them; and he thought there would not be above 40,000*l.* due to them, which was no great credit to them in his conclusion, that they should ask so much out of the way.

I thought Sir George Rooke's† business was not received in the House with an air as if any great matter would be made of it; though Seymour and Musgrave both interposed to ask questions. The chief was, why Sir Cloudesley Shovel was not sent with a number of ships to meet Sir George Rooke.

Sir George Hungerford moved that Sir Cloudesley should be sent for to give an account of his part, which Mr. Russell immediately seconded.

* The Bank of England established about two years and a half before with a capital of 140,000*l.*; lent in July of 1696, 200,000*l.* to pay the Flemish troops, demanding 18,000*l.* for the loan, when no one else would take the Exchequer Tallies under 30 per cent., according to Evelyn.

† A party business to throw blame upon the Admiralty.

I acquainted your Grace that your letter to the King was delivered in the manner you would have it.

It is well I did not delay it, in expectation when my Lord Sunderland should be prepared to second it, for I find he —— upon it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

November 12th, 1696.

I received yesterday both your Grace's letters; that of the 9th by the post, and Hayward brought that of the 10th, the enclosed have been all taken care of. I saw my Lord Keeper this morning, and had some discourse with him as to the Bill of Attainder, and as to Smith.*

He intends to write to you this evening, and I suppose will give you his opinion upon both. He thought it necessary first to speak to the King in relation to Smith, which is a matter he thinks the King is not unacquainted with, and that he will endeavour to be apprised of; and if he finds it so, he will try whether I may not be brought to the King, to tell him what I observed of that man.

Your Grace will please to take no notice of this to my Lord Keeper, till he mentions it first to you, for if I understand him aright, he was very tender on this point, lest it might give you any new discom-

* Captain Smith, the informer mentioned before.

posure; but for my own particular, I had rather the King were told it by my Lord Monmouth, especially than that it should be thrown into the House of Commons, for he will be best able to manage both the informers; and if he thinks Smith deserves a recompense, it will be fittest to come from that hand, and in this way I suppose it will be given him. If I am admitted to tell my thoughts of his discoveries, I shall do it pretty bluntly, and not vary from the opinion I always had of him.

There was a meeting yesterday at my Lord Wharton's, about the Bill of Attainder. I was sent for thither, and found Mr. Russell, Mr. Montague, Mr. Smith,* Sir Thomas Littleton, Mr. Brydges, and Mr. Attorney. Their discourse was almost over before I came, and the account they required of me was about Cook,† whether I thought he would stand to his evidence against Fenwick, if he were pardoned.

I knew no reason to believe the contrary, and I take the design of the question to be rather in order to have him produced to-morrow, or to have reserved him to supply Goodman's place, if the Attainder should be changed back again to an ordinary trial.

All they resolved on was to meet this day at Mr. Montague's, as soon as the House rose, which was late, and my Lord Keeper met them there, who being pressed to go away to Kensington, they came

* Lord of the Treasury. † The conspirator.

to a short determination, that the matter having gone on so far, they must not flag in it, but exert themselves to carry on the bill with the utmost rigour; and they hope their not standing too stiffly upon some things lately moved in favour of Sir John, as to the counsel allowed him, and having given proofs of their moderation in the management of the trial, may give them more credit, if they appear firm in the conclusion of it; and they have resolved to meet again to-morrow at my Lord Wharton's, at nine in the morning, to consider what they shall further agree in.

They apprehend that if any thing should proceed from them, that looked like putting off the attainder, it would be interpreted a compounding of the matter, and give strength to the false accusations, and their friends may think themselves of a true confession, they might otherwise have had.

I am impatient to see what the event will be to-morrow. Great industry will be used to bring him off, and it is very probable his counsel will be instructed and emboldened to say some impertinences; and yet if they should, I think they won't much advantage their cause, and I shall not be sorry to see the House provoked by them. One thing I don't well comprehend, which is, that Mr. Attorney has a backwardness towards this bill. He intends to perform that part of supporting the evidence, but seems undetermined whether he shall give his vote for passing the bill. If he has such a tenderness

upon him, it were to be wished he had kept it more to himself.

Your Grace's letter to Lord Portland was sent him last night, though it was late when Hayward arrived.

I suppose they have had the like information at Kensington, that your Grace mentions, which occasioned the general search,* both in the city and suburbs, and as well at Whitehall, as at Somerset House, in which the trained-bands and guards were employed, though I knew nothing of it till I went home, and saw the soldiers out in parties. Yet I hear the preparations for this search, and the noise it made, rendered it of little effect. I don't hear of any one of note taken up.

Lord Forbes indeed was secured going home to his lodging; whether he is detained or no, I know not.

The Justices of the Peace keeping constant meetings by order of Council, have summoned several before them, whom they suspect for their disaffection, and they seeing they are to be roundly dealt with, begin to think of greater compliances.†

* One of the frequent searches for Jacobites made during King William's reign, in general with but little effect. Evelyn places this search on the 8th Nov., o. s., four days before the date of Vernon's letter.

† All persons who refused to take the oaths to King William, were very justly classed as Jacobites, and watched closely by the police. But it would seem that they were often disturbed and irritated, without any fresh cause, for the purpose of driving them, by the state of discomfort in which they were kept, to submit with the rest of the nation.

Harry Bacely, I hear, has taken the oaths, and so has Ned Sheldon, even that of supremacy; and the example has spread further, but I know not the particulars.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

14th of November, 1696.

Having writ to your Grace by Mr. Arden, this day affords little to add to it. The House were only on their bill about the hammered money, and the enclosed will inform you how they proceeded in it.

I expected a new motion would be made for my Lady Mary's having leave to come to him, but there was nothing said of it, nor has he sent the names of the witnesses, as he was directed; so that either he thinks he can bring them without the House interposing, or perhaps he has none to produce, and therefore his counsel made that chicane to have a pretence of surprise, to cover the want of them.

I have heard no more of this matter, but that it is agreed on all hands, a good deal of resolution must be shewn in carrying on this prosecution to the uttermost, as well for the sake of the government, as for perfecting the vindication they have voted; and to send the Bill with a greater weight to the Lords, where it is like to meet with greater contests than among the Commons. And in order to it, the Lords are taking care to have a full house, (which I hear

is much pressed by my Lord Rochester), and they do not only summon the peers to attend, but prescribe them the time within which they shall appear, according to the distance of their places of residence; and their appearance is required upon pain of being otherwise sent for in custody.

I find it generally thought that your Grace's presence would restrain some, at least, from running into indirect ways, in the handling this affair; and therefore they wish you would be at the second reading of the Bill in the House of Lords. When that will be, you will know in time, if you shall be able to bear the journey.

Aron Smith* was this day at the House of Commons' bar, according to the summons ordered yesterday. He is allowed to the first of January to make up his accounts, and is not put under restraints.

In the meantime, he recriminated upon the Sergeant, for the oppression, cruelty, and exactions he suffered while he was in his custody, and it is referred to a Committee to enquire into it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

November 17th, 1696.

I think one may now give a good guess at what will be the success of the Bill of Attainder in the House of Commons. The question for committing

* The informer.

it being carried at eleven at night, by 182 against 128; and after all things were said that could be heaped together to deter men from dipping their hands in blood, and being concerned in a sanguinary cause.

The enclosed will inform you of some particulars, which I shall not need to repeat. I shall add, therefore, the opportunity given to Sir John Fenwick, to explain himself upon the first paper, has tended very much to increase the justification of those that were accused, he behaving himself still in the same sneaking manner, as if he expected a pardon to tell lies with impunity, and this behaviour of his left no longer any more room for cavils or insinuations concerning that paper, but gave others only occasion to make their compliments to the persons concerned, which Mr. Boyle did this day, and Mr. Harley again, though they both spoke against the bill.

My Lord Bradford's son, the lawyer, made a busy speech against the Bill, and so did Mr. Pelham; and Sir Richard Onslow divided with them, but said nothing.

Mr. Attorney did not speak for the bill, but he divided for the committing it.

Mr. Solicitor spoke, and very well. I need not name the rest of the speakers; your Grace can easily guess at them. Therefore I shall only mention Sir Herbert Croft, because he was a new one, and spoke for the bill very zealously.*

* This letter is but of small importance in many points of view, but I have not omitted it, which I have done in some cases very similar,

Colonel Godfrey moved the questions in behalf of my Lord Marlborough.

Mr. Brydges began these for your Grace. The first was, how Sir John Fenwick knew your Grace came into your employment by King James's approbation? I added a second, how he knew you were in treaty with King James before you quitted your employment?

Mr. Boscawen first moved for my Lord Godolphin, and prevented my Lord Coningsby, but they altered the method of the questions, and took a better.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

19th of November, 1696.

I received the honour of your Grace's letter of the 16th but this day, though it came by the post, and I ought to have had it yesterday. I wish therefore it may not be a disappointment to you in the sending down something that Mr. Philips writ for.

I saw my Lord Keeper yesterday, but the King had not yet said any thing to him about Smith, though he gave an opportunity for it, and he thought the King avoided it, as one that was not unacquainted with some parts of it at least. But he intended to put it a little forwarder, and then he would

inasmuch as it shows the resistance made even at this time, by many of the most distinguished men of all parties, to that method of criminal proceeding, called Attainder, which though sometimes the only way by which justice can be reached, is nevertheless, a very dangerous and objectionable mode.

write to your Grace, perhaps to-night.* He was very glad your Grace had recollected that you formerly mentioned some part of this fellow's information to the King, and that he then did not give much heed to it, as was very natural to believe, when one has such accounts from a man who never so much as pretended to be admitted into the conversation of those he informed against, or so much as to know where any one of them was to be found, or who would lay any thing to their charge, if they were apprehended. My Lord Keeper still says he will move the King; I may attend him, if he cares for that satisfaction.

* Lord Somers did, as Vernon imagined he would, write to the Duke that night, and gave him an account of his interview with the King. It had become evident to all parties by this time, that Smith, instigated by some higher person, (suspected, and afterwards discovered to be Lord Monmouth), was labouring to make the world believe that the Duke of Shrewsbury had been informed by him of the intended assassination of William by the Jacobites, and had neglected the intelligence, thus evidently countenancing the charges brought by Sir John Fenwick against the Duke. The intelligence of Smith, however, though disjointed and unproved, had been luckily communicated by Shrewsbury to the King, and the results of the Lord Keeper's interview with William, may as well be given in his own words. "As to the business of Smith, &c. * * * *. Having learned that story from your Grace, and more particularly from Mr. Vernon, and without knowing the turn which had been contrived to give that tale, I was well prepared to talk upon it, and was able to bring to the King's mind that passage about seizing him at Kensington; and how he spoke about that very thing when he first opened the business of the plot to the Lords at Kensington, and then said he had it from you; but that neither he nor you had much regarded it. This, by degrees, he perfectly recollected, with other circumstances of that matter, and since that time, he has told me, that he told Smith, that he had been acquainted with the whole matter by you."

I have made your Grace's compliments both to Mr. Boyle and Mr. Harley, who profess great respect for your Grace. I spoke to Mr. Harley likewise of another business. Mr. Boscawen letting me know that Mr. Harley had been told Sir John Fenwick had been examined in relation to him, I thought myself very much concerned to clear this, not knowing but it may be laid to my door, though I am sure I never mentioned him, or had him in my thoughts, while I was with Sir John Fenwick.

When I gave Mr. Harley these assurances, he said he had heard that something of this nature had been aimed at, but not in the examination I took, nor in that before the Lords Justices, but what he had heard, he said he would tell me another time.

I am now less concerned to know it, since it does not lie as an imputation on me, which I neither am, nor would be guilty of.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

November 21, 1696.

I hope your Grace received my Lord Keeper's letter by last post. It was not sent to the office till I was gone, so I could not enclose it. I was yesterday at Kensington upon my Lord Bellew's business. I was called into the closet, but it was to receive

the papers back again, the King not thinking fit to sign the letter. The reason he gave for it was, that he heard my Lord Bellew had lately refused to take the oaths, and since it was a matter of favour, he had no reason to extend it to such. I did not know how that was in fact, but I ventured to say, I supposed my Lord Bellew made no difficulty to take the oath of fidelity, but that the Justices required at the same time the oath of supremacy, and would not separate them.

He seemed to understand it otherwise, and did not think it necessary I should tell my Lord Bellew why the business was not done; for which reason I have forborne it, but shall tell it my Lord Wharton when he comes to town, if he will concern himself any further. I have since inquired into the practice of the Justices, and find they administer of late the oath of fidelity only to the Papists, and many of them have taken it. So, perhaps, my Lord Bellew among the rest; but that I am not yet informed of. I took that opportunity to acquaint my Lord Portland with the information your Grace has received concerning Sir George Barclay; it seemed to be new to him, and he wished it were further explained; he will consider, however, who may be fitly employed to observe what passes in that quarter.

The King was earnest to know whether your Grace could come up, while the Bill of Attainder was depending before the Lords. He said he could dispense with your absence as to his own business,

but he thought it of consequence to you to take care of the management of this.

We had a Dutch post this evening. I send your Grace such of the letters as will not be necessary to be shewn to the King. I reserve one from Paris, and another from Dunkirk; the latter says that all seamen were called in, and they were preparing to fit out their ships, both there and at Brest, which was to be done with all diligence. I have sent an extract to the Admiralty, and shall carry the original to-morrow to Kensington.

The enclosed letter of the Lord Chancellor Porter brings the melancholy news that Brigadier Fitz-Patrick was cast away, going over in the packet-boat to Ireland.

On Thursday last, Sir Joseph Williamson was sworn of the Privy Council, and it has thereupon been said, that he is intended for one of the plenipotentiaries of the treaty, but I know no ground for it. That is a matter little spoken of here, because it is thought it is not seriously meant in France. I suppose your Grace knows my Lord Lexington is promised to be one of the plenipotentiaries when the treaty shall be appointed; and if my Lord Villiers is to be the other, Sir Joseph Williamson would be of use to them, being the only person we have of experience in these matters.

My Lord Bellew has been just now here; he tells me he hears from my Lord Raby why his business was not done, because of the oaths; but that he had

taken the oaths of fidelity in Ireland, and would not otherwise be entitled to the benefit of the articles of Limerick, that he was ready to take it again, and is gone now about it.

But he had not refused it, for he had no summons sent him. He suspects the information came from Sir Harry Colt seeing him speak to the King yesterday morning.

The enclosed will inform your Grace what the House of Commons did these two days. I can't tell whether the Bill of Attainder will be reported on Monday, for either that or the committee of ways and means must give way.

My Lord Spencer made a very unadvised motion yesterday, about excluding the lords spiritual out of the bill; and Mr. Pulteney did worse, not to contain himself from shewing his reading upon that argument, which nobody minded, it was so very unseasonable, and contrary to the style of acts of parliament in the like cases. The Tory churchmen made a jest of it, and all of them divided against the bishops, in hopes the consequence of it would have been favourable for Sir John Fenwick.

The Lords have been adjourned these two days. The state of the nation was appointed for Thursday, but those who moved it, not finding themselves sufficiently prepared, put it off.

Mr. Russell told me this day that Sir George Rooke, being ordered to bring the letters he had writ to or received from a Secretary of State, was in

doubt whether he should not produce a letter your Grace writ to him from ———, wherein you mention the concern the King was in, that orders were not sent him sooner to look after the Toulon fleet.*

The King has cautioned him not to furnish the House with matter to cavil at, and I perceive he has advised with Mr. Russell about what he should present to the House, who thinks there is no need of shewing such a letter, since it contains no orders or directions, and he would have me tell Sir George Rooke my sense of it, which I think I ought to make no difficulty in.

Since I do not understand that the House required to know what any one's private opinion was, but what were the directions given, and in what time for intercepting the fleet.

There is a report in town, as if there had been a duel fought between my Lord Portland and Keppel; but I know not how to believe it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

November 24th, 1696.

I received yesterday the honour of your Grace's letter of the 21st instant, and went the same afternoon to my Lord Keeper, who thinks the business of Smith over, and that every thing has succeeded

* The letters of King William in May and June, 1696, fully justified Shrewsbury in so writing to Sir George Rooke.

luckily to put a good end to it; even that it has happened well, the King was so early acquainted with it, as to have it hinted to him presently after he arrived in England.

My Lord Keeper has so well refreshed his Majesty's memory, that he recollected your Grace had acquainted him with that information, and he made mention of it to the Cabinet Council, when the conspiracy was first opened to them.

It seems Smith has been lately introduced to the King, who has let him understand that matter was not suppressed or concealed; and though his information did not reach to the apprehending of any one, yet the King intended he should be considered.

My Lord Keeper did move the King, that if he had any doubts remaining, he would be pleased to hear what I had to say; but he declared he was satisfied, and there was no need of it. My Lord Keeper will see if this be to be pressed any farther as to Smith's going out of town. But as to your Grace's giving him any thing, he says it must not be thought of; and he is certainly in the right, my Lord Duke, for that man's villainy and folly would turn it to your prejudice, and detract from the justification you have from the King.

As to my Lady, perhaps Smith has engaged his aunt to tell so false a story.* My Lord Keeper laughs at that, and despises it, having a perfect re-

* This refers to some new attempt of Smith, in regard to which I find no account.

membrance of what passed at the meeting of the Lords in relation to Sir William Perkins* ; and the minute I took at that meeting, the 12th of March, shewed he had no such intention. He pretended to be in great disorder; he could not recollect himself, but if time were given him, he would say what was fit for a gentleman, but refused to answer any thing then, more than that he could not own the fact.

I gave my Lord Keeper an extract of whatever I had minuted that had any relation to Sir John Fenwick; I thought I could not do otherwise, that he might judge how much of it was fit to be communicated, and to whom. I told both my Lord Marlborough and Mr. Russell what I intended, and they approved of it.

I told my Lord Marlborough likewise, how your Grace enquired after him. He owns himself to blame that he has not writ to you; he seems very hearty in this matter, and as if he would push it. It would be well my Lord Wharton should be here soon, that they may advise together how they will manage the bill when it comes to the Lords; for I think no doubt is to be made but it will pass on Wednesday. The good members seem more eager for it than ever; those who were absent yesterday, as well as those that were present, were in great concern least the question might have been lost by the surprise in putting it so soon.

* The conspirator who was executed for devising the King's death, in the spring of the year 1696.

Mr. Philips, a new member for Ipswich, was but just admitted for Ipswich, and went out immediately after, upon the division for engrossing the bill.

Mr. How reproached him very roughly for his being inspired without hearing a word of the debate; and that is a general cavil among them, that those who pretend to judge without two witnesses, do it by the help of the light within them.

We are prepared to hear dismal menaces on Wednesday, of drawing blood upon ourselves and posterity, for Mr. Howe has given us a taste of it already, but it is like to be as well retorted.

A Dutch post arrived yesterday, and I send your Grace the letters, thinking nothing necessary to be shewn to the King. There was never a letter from Monsieur Jurieu's* correspondents.

I send, likewise, a letter I had from Mr. Hill, in answer to one I writ to him to consider whether he could not, out of the English or Irish priests who were in that country, or among those who either came from France or were going thither, find out one who might be depended on for intelligence either from the court of France or St. Germains, and your Grace would recompence him for it.

Your Grace was excused yesterday before my Lord Keeper received your letter, but the Earl of Rutland, Lord Guildford, and another, are ordered to be sent for in custody.

My Lord Keeper thinks my Lord Steward will

* I am doubtful in regard to the orthography of his name, the handwriting being very indistinct.

be for the bill; I hear he has talked otherwise in the chocolate house. He presses very much to have his cause come on before that time, but the hearing is put off till Monday next.

The Marquis of Winchester is a widower again; his lady died on Sunday night, having been ill some time of the dropsy.

I have spoke to Mr. Frankland about your Grace's servant; he remembers the promise they made, and will keep it. There has been but one of those employments disposed of since, to one for whom they had a prior engagement.

Mr. Russell thinks, that by the enquiry yesterday, it is aimed at to find some fault with him. Mr. Waller had picked out of Sir George Rooke's letter, that while he was at Cadiz he complained very much for the want of seamen, and thought if five or six hundred were not sent him, he must leave some ships behind, he was so ill provided by the few seamen the ships were furnished with, when the soldiers were taken out.

Mr. Russell undertook to make it appear those ships were better manned than the ships which came away, in proportion to their rates.

Sir George Rooke is very cautious and prudent in his answers, avoiding all occasions of loading the Admiralty, or shewing any resentment against them, though all endeavours are used to stir it up by representing the hardships put upon him, and the affront in turning him out of the command when he had acquitted himself so well in bringing home the

fleet, and given those advices which, if they had been followed, would have been of great advantage to the nation. That he proposed stopping at Spithead, where he might have been soon fitted to go to sea again, but instead thereof he was sent to the Downs, where nothing was ready for him.

I know not what light they have concerning letters Sir George Rooke writ to my Lord Portland and Colonel Crawford, giving them an account of the state of the fleet, and perhaps his thoughts upon what might have been done, and where the omission lay, but he pretended to remember no such letters.

The Admiralty being required to give an account what advices they received concerning the fitting out the Toulon squadron, and on what time they were ready to sail, I shall desire Mr. Yard to look through your Grace's letters of that time, that we may not be unprepared, if any side-wind reflection be intended upon the office.

Sir William Trumbull * made his reply to-day to the complaint of Greebe's wife; he was thought to have overdone it in enlarging upon the act of sovereignty exercised in that particular. I wish he be not found to have underdone it, in saying he had no other part than in taking him up upon the information he had received against him.

He touched upon his being removed afterwards,

* One of the two principal secretaries of state. He seems neither to have been trusted nor loved by his colleagues in office, and to have stood even more alone than Godolphin.

but as if it were done only because the messengers were so thronged at that time. Whereas, perhaps, the Committee may discover that the messengers were discharged of him by the King's warrant, countersigned by the Secretary, for delivering him to a Dutch sergeant. The warrant, I hear, has scarce been taken up, but I know not whether the messenger (who is Kitson) will have sense or courage enough to evade it, if he happens to be closely examined. Sir Thomas Dyke, who was easy in justifying the Secretary, moved for the Committee to examine the messenger. It looked as if he hoped to find my Lord Portland concerned in sending the man away.

Mr. Attorney and Mr. Solicitor spoke very well to the point of the prerogative, and that there could be no blame in sending away a foreigner; and they expected other speakers should have come into it, but these, seeing the temper of the House, and that some of their friends, as Sir Oliver Butler and others, pressed the bringing it to a Committee, they would not hazard their credit with them by opposing it, and perhaps to no purpose. I suppose the best care will be taken to let it die there.

There was a great number of weavers came down to-day to Westminster. They made their rendezvous in Moorfields, and marched down in order. Some in the House once thought they should be obliged to take notice of it, but it was not done, and they went away again. They brought no petition, but it was

said they came to complain of wrought silks imported from India, that were intended to be exposed to sale within a day or two.

I should think it would be hazardous to venture now, lest that rabble appear among the bidders.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

November 26, 1696.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 20th. I have not yet seen Colonel Cunningham, or any one from him. When he brings his report it shall be laid before the King, if your Grace don't find yourself well enough to come up.

I was at Kensington this morning, and the King was glad to hear you intended to make another trial, which he hoped would succeed better. I went to carry a letter Mr. Stanhope writ to your Grace of the 4th instant, o.s., that arrived last night. I can't send it you, the King having kept it; but it gives a melancholy account of the King of Spain. He says his fever returned upon him * the night when the former post came away, which was a fortnight before, and that it had continued ever since

* The King of Spain had been extremely ill during the summer of 1696, and we find in a letter from Lord Villiers, dated 9th October, N.S., was reported to have appointed "By will the second son of the Dauphin, his heir and successor, and left the Regency, during the child's minority, in the hands of the French faction."

with quotidian fits: that he was brought very weak, insomuch that his recovery began very much to be doubted, and they thought him besides under a very great uneasiness of mind, finding himself so much pressed by the Queen to alter his will in favour of the Arch-Duke, which he is averse to, and would have the settlement made by his father preserved, which was solemnly confirmed by the Cortes, substituting his sister, who was Empress and grandmother to the Prince of Bavaria, and entailing the Crown only in the next remainder upon the right heirs of the Emperor.

Mr. Stanhope thinks the King of Spain's death is so near a prospect, that he is already considering the consequences of it; he expects there will be great confusion and disorders at Madrid, and sees no care to prevent it, there being no guards or soldiers ordered thither. He apprehends the French will be the first there to take possession, and wishes he may have as fair quarter as Monsieur de Barillon had. He should be glad to hear Sir Cloudesley Shovel were come to Cadiz, not for the Plata which they did not expect this year, but for securing that place from the French, which he thought they would very soon have an eye upon, and perhaps be no unwelcome guests.

Sending this in his letter, I am apt to think, that with whatever design Pointis' squadron was provided, it may very well be employed to support the French pretensions on this occasion. In that case

they will hardly think of any attempt upon England or Ireland, from the latter of which places I had a letter yesterday, and upon the advices I sent them upon the 7th, and the subsequent orders that were dispatched the 10th, I find they had sent the troops to the sea-coast.

My Lord Coningsby has a more particular advice of it from my Lord Chancellor, and he thinks they will hardly be able to secure Cork or Kinsale, if either be attempted. He came this morning to speak to the King about it.

The letter I had from my Lord Chancellor I left with my Lord Portland, and told him what your Grace took notice of in Mr. Hill's letter, who seemed to have the same apprehensions, and I don't doubt but as much care is taken as can be to prevent it.

I gave the King likewise a letter from Colonel Johnson, from Jersey, dated the 17th. He says an English master of a ship was arrived there from Brest, whither he had been carried prisoner, and kept there till the 5th instant, o.s. He observed between twenty and thirty ships, fitting out from sixty to forty guns, and that transport ships were provided for land soldiers, with flat-bottomed boats; and in his way to St. Maloes, he met a great number of seamen travelling to Brest, and heard of more ships fitting out at Port Lewis.*

* At the period that these letters were written, the negociations were in progress for the peace of Ryswick; but great apprehensions were entertained that the pacific advances of Louis were but a cover to those

I have not heard of late whether the number of our ships be increased at Spithead. My Lord Berkeley is come to town upon the Lords summons, and Vice-Admiral Aylmer and Rear-Admiral Benbow are left in command.

I suppose my Lord Keeper has satisfied your Grace, by last post, how it stands as to Smith.* I having acquainted him the day before with your thoughts upon it, I have not had an opportunity to meet him since, but shall endeavour to do it tomorrow.

I told Mr. Russell, as your Grace ordered, what the express was sent for. He believes the person capable of such a piece of baseness, but had heard nothing of it before. I called upon my Lady Westmoreland as I came from Kensington, and would have been satisfied as to some further particulars. She could not tell whether Lord A———† knew of this matter, nor how he would behave himself, if he were named for an author, but I most pressed to know whether, if there were occasion, it would be

attempts upon the safety of England, and the stability of the new dynasty, which his great preparations for a vigorous prosecution of the war gave just reason to anticipate. Thus, but a few days before, the Duke of Shrewsbury received the knowledge of Louis's armament at Brest, his attention had been directed to that point by a letter from Lord Villiers at the Hague, who says, "I must own to your Grace, that this change in their negociations, and their preparations at Brest, make me fear some design like that of last year, which we cannot be too much aware of."

* Lord Somers had only told Shrewsbury, in the letter which preceded this, that he was "quite at ease as to Smith's matter."

† Aylesbury?

owned that the Lord M———*, either made that visit, or writ such a letter as is said, which she will endeavour to be informed in, and desires her name may be concealed, which is and shall be done accordingly.

I refer your Grace to the enclosed paper for an account of the passing of the Bill of Attainder yesterday; I don't find the Lords have yet read it, but notwithstanding I am told they have ordered Sir John Fenwick to be brought before them on Tuesday, and have allowed him pen, ink, and paper. In the meantime, I have not seen any who can inform me what this means.

I heard my Lord Portland say in the morning, that upon examining the list of lords, they judged the bill would pass by a majority of about fifteen, not including the bishops, where there would be a

* I believe this name to have been Monmouth, but in the MS. copy of the letters submitted to me, the name Middleton is written in the margin. The Earl of Middleton was Secretary of State to King James II., and one of his most high-minded and noble adherents. His wife was aunt to the Duke of Shrewsbury, being sister of Lady Anna Maria Bruce, Countess of Shrewsbury. Lord Middleton being in London at the time of the projected invasion, which was frustrated by the victory of La Hogue, was arrested and kept in the Tower for some time. He was there publicly visited more than once by his relation, then the Earl of Shrewsbury, and it was upon their known communication at this time that Sir John Fenwick founded his accusation against the Duke. It might be in order to obtain some refutation of the calumny from Middleton himself, that Mr. Vernon now interested Lady Westmoreland in the business. The best proof, however, of the preconcerted falsity of Sir John Fenwick's confession, is a fact stated in a letter from Lord Villiers, dated from the Hague, 23d November, 1696, by which it is proved that the accusation of that arch traitor was known in Paris before it was known in London.

majority for it likewise. It will, I hear, be endeavoured to get the King to be present at that debate, and to give some mark that his opinion concurs with it. Mr. Brydges tells me he has fixed the Duke of Bolton, who was something more than wavering before. There are great endeavours used to solicit and engage the young lords to be against the bill. I thought, indeed, it would have passed with a greater majority in the House of Commons, but some had a shyness in a case of life; some could not resist importunities, and some, I must say, sneaked and deserted. I find notice taken that Mr. Secretary was not at the division. Harry Heveringham was certainly absent. He says he would not condemn a man he had been drunk with, but many of the honest country gentlemen are scandalized, that some who are in the service of the crown shew so little regard to it.

The young ——* voted against the bill, and the old one went away, as did the Vice-Chamberlain, Sir Bevil Grenville, and others. It may occasion a disgust, if it be thought an indifferent thing, whether men shew a firmness to the Government or not, upon so remarkable an occasion.

I observed yesterday that some of the top speakers on the other side did not come into yesterday's debate, as Musgrave, Harley, How. I know not whether it were, that soon after candles were called for, Mr. Sloane coming from dinner, made a terrible

* This word is apparently Frou, but is indistinct.

long and loud speech, giving defiance to answer his points of law, which, though they were pertinent, yet people grew impatient for the question, and the interruption given him might have extended to others. Their silence kept some of ours in reserve, as Sir Thomas Littleton, Sir Robert Rich, and Mr. Solicitor; but Mr. Attorney I think was not there.

I shall send for Pean's bail, and tell him what I think he ought to do.

I can't satisfy your Grace what the rates and duties are that must raise this year's supply. I take it for granted the whole is concerted, and judged capable to do the business as well as our circumstances will bear; and the scheme is opened by degrees at the club, as it is necessary to bring it on to a conclusion. The other side tell them they are aiming at excuses, and therefore preclude all other ways to make a necessity of complying with them. Some say what Mr. Montague opened to-day in behalf of the deficiencies, was the ground-work of what Mr. Foley would have proposed, if he had been invited to do it. But he spoke very long against the frame of it, but chiefly against the Bank's being concerned in it, which he said would fail them, and was not to be depended upon.

The person your Grace mentions, who promised to procure you a correspondent on the coast, is Mr. Nelson, whom I meet accidentally sometimes, and I'll endeavour to speak with him again.

Your Grace may remember he had an answer

from the man he designed for that purpose, who insisted upon a sum of money paid him in hand, to buy him an office, which was to be a good round sum. It would have been in his own choice afterwards, whether he would have done any thing to deserve it. It was desired he would give some proof of what he is capable of; but I don't remember he was heard of since.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

November 28th, 1696.

There coming no letters from Eyford yesterday, it is hoped your Grace may be on your way hither. I wish it may be so, if you are in a state to go through with the journey; but I, having no knowledge of it, would not forbear informing you of what has passed, though it is not of great consequence at present.

I have seen my Lord Keeper, and find I was not mistaken in my belief, that he had satisfied your Grace as to Smith, that he was not like to be any further troublesome: he has light upon a good conjuncture to have such services as those were considered. I thought at first the best way of dealing with him was to have tried his intelligencer, Hewett, for * of treason, and make him the evidence

* A word wanting.

against him, and let either of them come off as well as they could. But he was better used than he deserved; and having that to say for himself, he was promised he should not be an evidence, some consideration was had for him, though he had none for any body else.

I don't know whether my Lord Keeper can tell who brought him to the King, but he made no answer to it.

I have had it a little further explained to me what was meant by the order on Thursday, for allowing Sir John Fenwick pen, ink, and paper. My Lord Carlisle moved that counsel might be allowed him; and the Lords thinking it ought not to be; but upon his petition, pen and ink was allowed him for writing one; and that he might make no other use of it, the Secretary was to appoint one to be present, who, I think, is Nicholas Baker.

My Lord Stamford, I heard, proposed the sending for him on Tuesday. I don't yet know the meaning of it, unless it were that he should hear the bill read the first time in the nature of an arraignment; though this lord's intimacy with Sir Rowland Gwynn and some others of our house, who have entertained unintelligible notions of advantages to be made by Sir John's confession, makes me suspect there is something covered under it that don't yet appear.

I perceive the well-meaning Lords had not then met to resolve how they will manage this cause, and

prevent being imposed upon by improper motions. I suppose they have taken better care since, and will be better upon their guard.

The Lords were yesterday upon the state of the nation, and it turned chiefly upon the fleet. Perhaps they will run into the same enquiry about the Toulon fleet.

The enclosed will inform your Grace of what the Commons have been upon these two days. The Bill of Elections is driven on furiously by those who aim at making sure of the next parliament, now they despair of this; though I wish they don't even now get an advantage, by dividing the unwary landed gentlemen, who shew a fondness for this bill, lest the boroughs being provoked by their thrift in a former bill, should revenge themselves by braving them out, and prefer the members of their own corporations, and therefore they would not hear of a clause to qualify men by their personal estates.

Mr. Cowper has yet further provoked them by saying, that an active industrious man who employed 5,000*l.* in trade, was every whit as fit to be a member there, as a country gentleman of 200*l.* a-year, who spent all his time in hawking and hunting, and was over head and ears in debt.

My Lord Norreys answered him that he was one of those country gentlemen, but thought himself as fit to sit there as those who were used to take money for their opinion.

Mr. Howe overslipt himself, and happened to

open the design further than he should have done, saying this bill was but the first step to a good parliament, and he hoped they should advance it a little further hereafter. So that it is visibly intended they will qualify their members hereafter, that the choice shall lie in a very narrow compass, and we are to have a senate of patricians. I know not whether the Lords will not think themselves concerned to look after it.

We had a Dutch post yesterday; I send your Grace the letters it brought, they not being necessary to be carried to Kensington. There was one more from Brest without a date, but Mr. Yard has not given it me, since he had it to make an extract for the Admiralty. It speaks still of Pointis' squadron of about twenty ships, and that three thousand men were to be embarked. The talk was as if it were designed for the Spanish West Indies, and that an advice-boat was despatched to give the buccaneers notice to be in a readiness. I shewed it to my Lord Portland, as I did also what Mr. Hill writes about an enquiry the Queen of Spain had been making.

The Lords of the Council and those of the Treasury went yesterday to the Common Council, to whom my Lord Keeper proposed a loan to supply the public occasions, pursuant to the late vote of the Commons. When they had been a little while withdrawn, the Recorder was instructed to answer it better than he has been known to do, that the

city was disposed to give all proofs of their willingness to stand by this government. In answer to a question asking what the loan must be in, Mr. Montague answered that one-fourth part would be taken in hammered money at *5s.* 8*d.* per ounce, another fourth in Bank bills, and the rest in milled money and gold. I suppose the subscriptions are now going about.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

November 30th, 1696.

My Lord Marlborough said he would write to your Grace when there was a sure hand to send it by. I desired Mr. Chancey therefore to call this evening and give him notice of this opportunity; but I have no letter sent me, and conclude his Lordship is at some meeting to concert to-morrow's management, and that he will defer writing till Sir Thomas Millington goes.

I sent this night to know whether my Lord Wharton were come to town, but he is not expected till eleven o'clock; at that hour Sir John Fenwick is ordered to be brought down, and the Lords are ordered to attend by twelve, upon the displeasure of the house.

I don't see anybody that knows what he comes for to-morrow, unless it be to hear the bill read, and

to make his demand for counsel. He has writ to my Lord Keeper to that effect; but the Lords have yet made no answer to it.

My Lord Portland is very hearty and industrious in this matter, and does not stick to speak to any one my Lord Keeper desires. I hear the Duke of Leeds, Lord Rochester, Lord Nottingham, and others, have had a meeting with the family of the Howards, and on Saturday last the Lord Monmouth was an hour and a half walking with my Lord Nottingham in the Court of Requests and Westminster Hall. Blancard, who observed them all the while, asked him how that intimacy came. He replied, that Lord Nottingham was persuading him to be against the bill, and he was endeavouring to convert him to be for it. In his discourse, I hear he argues very much for the bill; and it is very probable he will vote that way.

My Lord Macclesfield, who thinks he knows the sentiments of most lords, and there are very few he has not spoke with, seems very positive that the bill will pass by a majority of ten or twelve. And perhaps he may not be much out; if there be no lurking contrivance to divert it from going on in its ordinary. Some are sensible there will be a want of speakers to support the bill. My Lord Tankerville will signalise himself, but it is hard to find him seconds.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 1, 1696.

Having writ to your Grace last night by a messenger, there is little left for this day, unless what has passed in the House of Lords, which my Lord Wharton sends you the account of; and his Lordship being pleased to let me see what he writes, I shall not repeat any thing that is in his letter, and he has left nothing more to be said. I shall only add that my Lord Portland has a better opinion this day of the bill's passing than yesterday. By Sir John Fenwick's behaviour, it looks as if the advice your Grace has seen had not been given him,* or he knew not which way to turn himself to make a shew of proof.

My Lord Portland mentioned Smith to-night, that he had proposed to him going to Flanders, where the King would give him an employment; he pretended to like it very well, but I don't hear he has resolved yet upon going.

It is not long since my Lord gave him fifty guineas, and he still pretends to be very much in debt, and under great fear of being arrested. I know not whether this be not a pretence for a farther supply; I find he still talks after the same rate of the capacity he is in to discover the intrigues of the enemies

* Probably the papers of advice furnished him by Lord Monmouth, of which there will be farther mention hereafter.

of the government. His Lordship giving me this opportunity, I told him what I observed of him, while I had any thing to do with him, and the little use could be made of his observations, though he had got the names of persons whose guilt was made out afterwards by others.

I suppose the Lords aim at having the letter my Lord Steward writ to the King, though it is not so expressed. My Lord Normanby was one who preferred it the most; I suppose he might do it the more in hopes to expose my Lord Steward, than with regard to Sir John Fenwick. They were in so much haste for it, that my Lord Nottingham proposed the sending two of the Judges to the King immediately, but that the Duke of Leeds opposed, as not being their method of addressing the King. The debate of this matter lasted above two hours, and perhaps there may be more of it to-morrow.

Sir Charles Sedley speeched it this day for the charging the customs. Mr. Pelham and Sir Herbert Croft could not come up to it; but both spoke against it, and had Mr. How's compliment for it, that the landed men were to be trusted, and would never abandon the interest of their country.

Mr. Montague said this was but what others would have proposed, meaning the Speaker's scheme, and by that the customs were to be engaged for five years beyond the present term, and the tallies were all to be collected and disposed of in the like manner, though not in the same place. I find this was

calculated for the Land-Bank, if the House had been as well disposed to it this year as the last. Mr. Montague said he had the project in his hand, but Harley would have made it something else, but was not ready at it.

The Lords are to go to-morrow upon the state of the nation. The fleet and the Bank are like to be the two points they will fix on.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 2d, 1696.

The occasion I had of going to Kensington, was by my Lord Keeper's directions to know the King's pleasure, whether he would send to the House of Lords Sir John Fenwick's letter intercepted at Romney. My Lord's reasons for it were, that the danger he thought himself in, and his contrivance to get off by starving the jury, would go a good way to satisfy the bishops, at least, that he had no part of his dependence on his innocence; and further, as the whole family of the Howards seem combined to save him, my Lord thinks it fit the House should know that his confidence lay there from the beginning, and that it may preserve some from being misled by them.

The King approved of it, and accordingly I moved the House this morning, and had the letter returned me, (it was the copy only Mr. Joddrell had lost),

and it was not so defaced, but I immediately took another copy, and gave it with the original to my Lord Wharton, who presented them to the House of Lords, as from the King, and that was all the papers sent them, which I hear they acquiesce in; the letter was read, and proved a subject of mirth.

The Lords did no more in reference to the state of the nation, than appoint going into a Committee to-morrow, at which Sir George Rooke is to attend.

The enclosed will inform your Grace what the Commons have done. I was not returned from Kensington when Mr. How opened against the gifts of money and land, but I hear he did it outrageously.

The great heart-burning now is at my Lord Rochford's grant of the Powys lands. This was laid a matter to turn the supply of deficiencies. Mr. Pelham stuck to his opinion in that debate, and argued it over again. My Lord Cutts answered him in his way, which is not very judicious; he expressed a good deal of respect for him, but withal said, when any forsook the truth, he forsook them, which gave Mr. Pelham a handle for a very genteel vindication of himself, and if his Lordship would excuse him in this, where his judgment would not let him comply, he hoped he might satisfy him within three or four days, that he had not forsaken the truth.

I believe he meant by it, that he should come up to excuses which he had hinted at before, not as

approving of them, but submitting to what a necessary care for the support of the government required. Mr. Montague treated him with more softness, and answered for him, that he was governed only by the convictions of his judgment, and therefore applied himself to rectify it.

Sir Herbert Crofts did not come to-day, but Sir Richard Onslow divided for that opinion, though he did not speak to it.

Mr. Yard, not remembering whether the Admiralty had the extract about the Port of St. Maloes, sends it them now; he has looked out the advices your Grace sent to Sir George Rooke, about the Toulon fleet, which go on in order, beginning at the 3d of December. But it does not appear what was then sent to the Admiralty. I very well remember the Admiralty were unacquainted with the first orders that were sent to Sir George Rooke for his return, and suspected only what the duplicate contained, which was afterwards given them to be sent by one of their advice boats.

I understand the management yesterday in the House of Lords, was committed to the Earl of Tankerville. He proposed that no questions should be asked the prisoner but by my Lord Keeper, and those such as the House first approved of. That the paper should be shewn only to Sir John, to own, if he thought fit, whether it were his hand writing, but that he should not be permitted to read it. He

thought there was too much encouragement given for his confessing, but he is better satisfied now, since he finds he made no more use of it.

My Lord Monmouth contested these proposals, which some, who are in the dark as to his good intentions, attributed to his humour of disliking what don't proceed from himself.

There is a meeting at your Grace's at five this evening of some of the Cabinet, viz., the Archbishop, Lord Keeper, Lord Privy Seal, Lord Portland, and Mr. Secretary. Several people have been called in and examined, but I know not upon what points, not being required to attend. I am told it is upon the information of Captain Vaughan, who was reproved on this account.

I find one John Cornelius has been sent for from Newgate, whom your Grace committed about fourteen months ago by the name of Caston. It seems he is an Irishman, but then pretending to be a Frenchman, was committed as an alien spy; he was taken with four or five more that were designing to run away with a hoy, either out of the Nore, or from Margate.

Garret Barry was found with them, and one Howard, who is still in Newgate; why they have not been prosecuted I know not. The Lords sent for me to know what was the information against this Cornelius, alias Caston, and I have writ to Mr. Smith about it, to whom those in-

formations were always delivered, in order to a prosecution.

I suppose Vaughan has either confessed of these people's pirating life, or makes use of this fellow to prove it upon others.

The Lords are now sitting on Sir John Fenwick's business. All others being shut out from hearing what passed, I shall be able to give your Grace but a very imperfect account of it, and those who can do it better, I believe will have no time for it to-night.

Sir John sent a petition in the morning, desiring he might be brought before the Lords, which was granted. I don't hear that he at first said more than vindicated his innocence as to the assassination and intended invasion, and that he had so much as the least knowledge of either of them, and that the meeting at Leaden Hall Street,* was not for any such purpose, as had been sworn. He was called in several times. In one of them my Lord Carlisle, I know not by what enducements, proposed his being asked whether he had received any paper of advice and instructions, how he should behave himself at his trial, which he denied at first; but my Lord Carlisle having leave to ask him the question, he owned his wife had brought him a paper to that

* A famous meeting at the King's Head Tavern, in Leadenhall Street, at which all the principal conspirators were present.

effect, which Mrs. Lawson gave her, who had it from the Duchess of Norfolk,* and he understood the advice came from the Earl of Monmouth.†

Lord Monmouth denied the giving any such paper, and desired it might be produced. He did not disown that some relations of his had asked his opinion, what was the best course Sir John could take to bring himself off, and that he told them he knew of none, but a frank and open confession of what he knew, and if they had put any thing else into a paper, it was an invention of their own.

The three ladies above-mentioned were sent for,

* The adulterous wife of Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, and nearly related to Lord Monmouth, being daughter of Henry, second Earl of Peterborough.

† This was the first public announcement of the tampering of Lord Monmouth with the prisoner, for the purpose of destroying of Lord Shrewsbury and others; but it had been long previously suspected, as may have been seen from various parts of these letters. On the first day of this very irregular trial, after the paper had been read in Fenwick's presence, which he sent to the King immediately after his arrest, as well as the notes of subsequent examination taken by Mr. Vernon, he was required by the House to justify his assertions, and make a fuller confession, but he refused, with an evident fear of committing himself, and on the conduct of Lord Monmouth, Wharton remarks, in a letter to Shrewsbury,—"My Lord Monmouth was observed to be pretty easy and favourable to the prisoner, and to give him all encouragement to have made out the accusations in his paper; but when he found him resolved to do nothing of the kind, seemed to show a good deal of zeal against him afterwards." The whole family of Howard exerted themselves vigorously to shield Sir John Fenwick, who had married their relation. It would seem, however, that Monmouth, angry that Sir John did not become entirely his instrument, by aggravating his charges against Shrewsbury, spoke as Lord Wharton says, against him, and that, indignant at this conduct, Lord Carlisle, Lady Mary Fenwick's near relation, called for that evidence which inculpated Monmouth in the manner here displayed." See an after letter of Vernon's.

but none of them could be found, except my Lady Mary Fenwick, and therefore I suppose it was not thought necessary to call her in alone.

Sir John Fenwick was likewise spoke to about his paper sent to the King, which he spoke of as what he designed only for the King's information, without expecting it should ever be made publick. He told the King what he had heard for his own use only; being pressed further upon it, he returned to what he said formerly, that he was upon his life, he had no security, he did not know but what he said might be prejudicial to him, and he had always declared he had rather die than be an evidence. The Lords made an order that what he said to them should not be made use of to his prejudice, neither there nor elsewhere. He was not so satisfied therewith, as to say anything more to them. And they further addressed to his Majesty, by my Lord Wharton, to confirm that he should receive no prejudice by his confession. I know not whether it were not added, that he should be assured of his life, if what he said were material or satisfactory.* My Lord brought back an answer granting their request. But I don't hear Sir John made any use

* This was not added to the Lords' address to the King, on the first reading of the bill, and indeed we do not find, from Lord Wharton's letters, that even on the third reading it was proposed, till Lord Wharton's return from the King's Council, that nothing said by Fenwick at the bar, should be used against him, for that nobleman, in a letter to the Duke of Shrewsbury states, that the prisoner applied for such an assurance of pardon after his return, but was refused by the Lords.

of it; for, after, he was called in once or twice, and was a very short time with the Lords. They adjourned their debate about the bill till to-morrow. The Lords sat till twelve this night.

Sir Cloudesley Shovel sailed on Saturday, and the wind having been ever since fair till this day, it is supposed he was off Ushant yesterday.

There are about eight men of war in the Downs.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 2, 1696.

I have received the honour of your Grace's letters of the 27th and 29th, and could not hear any thing more welcome than that your Grace finds yourself in so fair a way of recovery, which I hope will proceed without interruption.

I have never had any intention of giving any thing either to Read or Mrs. Scott,* till your Grace came to town, nor to make any use of the former, but as my Lord Keeper and Lord Marlborough should advise.

I have made your Grace's compliments to Sir Joseph Williamson, who received it very respectfully, as coming from one he had so great an honour for, and said he would make his acknowledgments for it.

* The persons from whom he had obtained information concerning Smith's conduct.

Your Grace will understand Mr. Meester's answer by his letter here enclosed. I spoke to Mr. Montague about the 500*l.* that had been desired of them so long ago; he gave me little encouragement to hope for any ready money from them yet awhile, which I am sorry for, since the time now draws on that the correspondents will expect their payments, and the King is now more inquisitive after their letter than heretofore.

Two Dutch mails arrived this morning. I happened to be at Kensington when Mr. Frankland brought him the news of it, and he ordered me to send the letters to him, which was done as soon as I could get an extract for your Grace, and by that another was made for the Admiralty.

The occasion of my going to Kensington was to carry a letter from my Lord Montrath * and Lord Drogheda to your Grace, that was brought by express, giving an account that my Lord Chancellor Porter died the 8th instant,† being suddenly seized with an apoplectic fit, while he was sitting himself down to write, and his servant returning into his chamber soon after found him dead in his chair.

Mr. Secretary Trumbull came some time after with the accounts he had received of it. So I don't doubt but he is to dispatch the orders that will be requisite, either for supplying the commission of justices, or appointing commissioners for that

* Fellow Lords Justices with Lord Chancellor Porter.

† This date is erroneous.

seal till the King thinks of a fit person for chancellor.

I have been thinking of it in the meantime, and none occurs to me more fit than Mr. Methuen, as well for his prudence and principles as his having been bred up in those courts.

I have further considered that if your Grace should ever go for Ireland, as was once talked of, you would have in this man, one that you might entirely depend on, or otherwise you might oblige him in contributing to his advancement to that post, and have the envoyship of Portugal to dispose of, as once you intended. I was so full of it, that I mentioned to my Lord Portland what I thought of this gentleman's deserts, and he spoke as if he had a very good opinion of him. I have since taken some notice of it to Mr. Methuen himself, who apprehends it may be thought too honourable a post for him, but he don't look upon himself as unqualified to discharge it.

I thought it worth while for him to try his friends. He thinks himself very well already in my Lord Sunderland's good opinion, and has a friend who can fix him, if he be not engaged; he believes, too, my Lord may have favourably thought of him, and I promised him to open the matter to your Grace, believing, if you had not formerly entered into any considerations about the disposal of this office, you might wish one so well qualified in it, and if that were your opinion, you would write to my Lord

Keeper about it. It will not be judged fit, I suppose, to take any of the Irish lawyers, both as to the country and the factions they are divided into, and one to be sent from hence should not be merely chosen for his abilities at the bar; and when Sir Charles Porter was sent, I think he might as little have pretended to it as this gentleman, who to his knowledge in the law has added his experience abroad, and his commendable behaviour in the House of Commons.

But I submit all to what your Grace shall judge of it.*

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 5th, 1696.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 3rd. I hope Sir Thomas Millington will bring us a little more comfort as to the state of your Grace's condition.† * * * * *

* * * Mr. Nelson has been with me; he says, he has not heard from the person for a long time, whom he proposed to your Grace as a person fit to be employed for intelligence, being now

* The suggestion in regard to Mr. Methuen was immediately followed by the Duke of Shrewsbury, and he was proposed to the King by Lord Somers, while Sir John Rushout was mentioned as a fit person to carry on the negotiations with Portugal commenced by Methuen. The King, however, objected strongly to Mr. Rushout, and seems to have remained undecided in regard to Methuen for some time.

† A part of this letter is omitted as only referring to the payment of messengers for travelling expenses, &c.

a kind of an under-secretary to the Intendant of Bretagne. His former proposal was, that he should be gratified beforehand with such a sum as would purchase him an office in Brest, without mentioning what that would amount to; and this, Mr. Nelson said, he did not think very reasonable, and would have had him give some proofs, first of his capacity, and that he might be depended on.

I told him your Grace would be glad he would write to him again, to know whether he has thought better of it since; and if he will engage in this matter, and acquit himself to satisfaction, it will not be stood upon to give 1,500 or 2,000 livres immediately, to dispose of as he thinks fit, besides the annual pension of 300*l.* sterling, which was his first demand. Mr. Nelson promised to write this to him by last night's post.

I was with my Lord Portland this morning at Kensington, who shewed me a letter he received last night from Smith, which was very arrogant and impertinent. He takes notice of the fifty guineas my Lord had given him, which went but a little way in satisfying some importunate creditors: in short, that he wanted more money, and he hoped it would not be denied him; for in consideration of his Lordship he had forborne to follow the advice given him, of laying before the Parliament the discoveries he had formerly made, and they were so zealous for the King's preservation, that they would not let such services as his were pass unrewarded.

In the postscript he says he was at the back stairs waiting for an answer. My Lord it seems sent for him, and finding such a fellow was to be dealt with cautiously, he endeavoured to argue him out of it, by telling him how preposterous it was for him, who magnified himself on the interest he had among the Jacobites, and that he would turn it to the King's service by getting into and laying open all their designs, should of a sudden discover himself as one that has all along made his business to betray them. He especially pretends to a great succession to an estate of 3,000*l.* per annum, by the kindness of Mr. Smith (God knows who that is), his near relation, but a Roman Catholick. He made a shew of yielding to these reasons; I suppose the rather my Lord telling him, before he could give him more money, he must receive orders from the King.

I told his Lordship he must expect to hear of him in a day or two, and then if he thought fit to give him some farther supply, it might quiet him till Sir John Fenwick's trial was over, which was worth considering, for those who would countenance him now, perhaps will think themselves less concerned to do it hereafter.

It is very probable this blade has lately met with his old acquaintance my Lord Monmouth, for he happened to be at the King's supper when that Lord came in, who I hear since has been enquiring after him these three weeks. I don't hear they spoke to one another there.

As soon as I came from Kensington, I told my Lord Keeper what I had learnt, who had heard before of the letter, and intended to speak to my Lord Portland, that care may be taken to keep him quiet.

I can't but reflect what ridiculous things may happen to create disturbances, not so much from the nature of the thing, as what malice may be able to improve it to in some conjunctures. I hope this will not break out just at this time, but whenever it does, I am sure it ought to be despised.

They now tell me this man is a prisoner in the Fleet for debt, so that I suppose his going into Flanders is impracticable. I find Sir William Trumbull mentioned in his letter; I know not whether he is admitted to him on any other account than to acquaint him what he observed among the Jacobites. But for his further supply, Sir William tells him he must apply to my Lord Portland.

I had some discourse with Sir William this morning of another nature before my Lord Portland. He took an occasion to tell me, that the warrant the King signed for delivering Griebe to the Dutch sergeant was writ by some of the clerks in your Grace's office, and that he did not know who procured the King's hand to it, but he did not. I told him it might very well be writ in the office, as many warrants were at that time, which he signed and directed the preparing them; and who presented it to the King I knew as little as he, but if he did not

intend to disown the countersigning it, I did not know to what purpose it would be to put scruples into people's heads, as to the manner it passed. I thought, if there was any mistake in this business, it was only that what might have been properly done by the King in Council, the owning whereof would make a speedier and better end of it, than by putting the House upon farther enquiries, and supposing there was something mysterious in it. My Lord Portland was on my side in this matter; whether Mr. Secretary will go that way, I know not; but if it be his intention to lay the blame here, with all the respect I pay to his station, I shall lay the brat at the right door, and perhaps it will be those only ought to answer who countersign. By his saying this, I am to believe my Lord Portland might speak to him about this warrant, and procure the King's hand to it. I believe he would not care to name my Lord, and I'll assure him I shall be no less cautious, now he has given me time to think of it.

I met Sir George Rooke this morning at Kensington. I told him the concern your Grace was in,* that two advice-boats should be going backwards and forwards toward Brest. They had thought of it, but the vessels employed had got nobody from the coast, but being ill weather were disabled; one of them, however, was fitted out again and ready to go to sea.

Sir George tells me what the Lords would know of the Admiralty, whether the fleet of England be

* i. e. the desire your Grace entertained.

sufficient for the security of England, Ireland, and the Plantations, and for the protection of trade.

His answer was, the knowledge of that would depend upon what preparations the enemy makes, and how they design to employ their force. This is not thought satisfactory, but the Admiralty are further to think of it.

They have given the Lords a list of 250 men-of-war of all sorts, that are in the King's pay, and told them the fleet was never yet in so good a condition.

Admiral Almond's* secretary tells me their ships are come to Spithead; there are seven of them, three of fifty guns and upwards, and four of forty. He reckons they have fourteen men-of-war now at Spithead, and expect six more from the Texel, four of them he thinks ready to sail. The others lost their opportunity of getting in time enough to take their provisions, and so may not come so soon.

I perceive these are the ships that returned from the Sound.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 8, 1696.

I have given Martin Peace's letter to my Lord Keeper, who will think of some Worcestershire man fit to be employed in this enquiry. I believe your Grace makes a right judgment of the man, and the

* I have retained the various ways of spelling this and other names, except where there was an evident slip of the pen.

result of this examination may make it more necessary to send him out of the kingdom, since the killing the King begins to run in his thoughts.

I find by my Lord Keeper that Smith has received a farther supply of money, and his Lordship thinks him now quieted for some time, having seen something under his hand to that effect, which he writ to another who has him in management, besides Lord Monmouth. He did not name him, and whether he means my Lord Stamford or not I can't tell.

My Lord intended to write to your Grace with the first opportunity; he thought he should be so taken up this day with Sir John Fenwick's trial, that there would be no time for it. But it has not proved so; about two o'clock a message came from the Lords to the House of Commons, to let them know they had occasion to examine two of their members, viz. my Lord Cutts and myself, and desired we might come to them when required, which was granted, and accordingly we went thither, where we heard they were in debate about allowing the prisoner longer time for the bringing up the witnesses. It seems the first order the Lords made was for a hearing by counsel. Mr. Attorney observing it when it was brought forward, he foresaw there would be a cavil, because there was no mention of witnesses, whereupon a later order was made upon a new motion, that witnesses should be heard on both sides. I know not whether this were done on Thursday or Saturday last, but Sir John pretends some of his

witnesses were at so great a distance, they would not be here within the time. They tell me he talks of their being at Wisbeach and Lynn, whereupon the Lords have ordered the trial to be put off till this day se'nnight. It was soon resolved on, and I suppose there was no division about it.

I hear of three Lords that were excused their attendance this day, viz. Burlington, Falconbridge, and Bradford.

My Lord Cutts is summoned, I think, to support Porter's credit,* and to give an account in what manner he made his first discovery to him.

I send your Grace the letters that came yesterday by the foreign post. Those from Paris, Dunkirk, and Brest, my Lord Portland carried last night to the King, so your Grace has only an extract prepared by Mr. Yard, and the Admiralty has another. They don't like it that the preparation is so great at Dunkirk, and that the intention is to join with those at Brest, which they least wished, for that will bring together a formidable strength. The King had all along told them there was nothing considerable providing at Dunkirk, and your Grace's letters shewing the contrary, Sir Robert Rich told me we confounded them more with our advices than instructed them. But I find Mr. Russell takes great notice of what is now writ, and wishes they knew as well how to provide against it.

* The only witness against Sir John Fenwick after the evasion of Goodman.

The King has been of opinion, that the ships at Spithead should go to sea, and cruise off Ushant. The Admiralty think it very hazardous at the time of the year; how it will be determined I can't tell. In the meantime it is very ridiculous, now the Admirals and Admiralty have so much business on their hands, that they should be forced to dance attendance to please Jack How and Waller, and give them occasion to make their unreasonable reflections.

My Lord Villiers sends your Grace a valuable piece of news,* if it be not a cover to other designs. Mr. Prior† sent me a short account of it, which I received just before the House were going into a committee upon the state of the nation.

I happened to tell it my next neighbour, and it ran round the House like fire in a stubble, and my Lord Coningsby brought it into a speech. It came very much apropos, and contributed to put the committee in good humour, and was a preservative against the sour contrivances for that day.

Your Grace will see what a strange motion Mr. How made to throw the army and country into the last discontent, one against the other. If a descent be intended, this was well calculated for it to make all the soldiers desert, but it was treated as it deserved.

* Notice conveyed by Lord Villiers to the Duke by a letter, dated 11th December, N.S., that the King of France was ready, on the conclusion of peace, to acknowledge William as King of England.

† The poet.

I don't know but he may do something as well natured in relation to the Admiralty, which he is impatient to bring on the stage, and it is ordered for to-morrow. There were as bad intentions discovered to-day by the opposition they gave to the allowing a premium for the loans. Musgrave and Seymour took pains to have it understood, it was not to be done by consent, but when after all the inclination of the House ran that way, and the Speaker was endeavouring to put it out of doubt, and that the question was, therefore, waived in that consideration, my Lord Norreys was vehement against it, and was handsomely taken up for it by Sir Joseph Williamson. All I can say to it, there is an implacable ferment in some people, and if it be not vigorously opposed it may have ill consequences.

I expect it will further shew itself upon opening the ways and means, which they were very eager for, without any design to further them.

Your Grace will see the account Monsieur Carlbence gives of an assassin seized in Holland. Mr. Secretary, or the King rather, has had advice of him some time since, and he was expected to come over in the packet-boat, measures being taken accordingly; but it seems he is seized in Holland, and there I hear he will be put to the question.*

* * * *

There were one hundred and twenty-seven lords in the House this day, fourteen whereof were

* Part of this letter is omitted, referring merely to minor military appointments.

bishops. They say they are pretty equally divided, eleven for the bill, and ten against it. There are not the same counsel for the bill that pleaded before the House of Commons. Mr. Attorney has now engaged Sergeant Wright and Mr. Pratt; they had opened the charge and were calling their witnesses, when the counsel on the other side opposed it, and drew on the debate for longer time.

The Lords took yesterday into consideration the resolution the Commons sent them relating to the taking away of privilege during the time the parliament shall not be sitting, and they intend either to carry it backwards or forwards, having ordered a bill to be brought in for regulating the privileges of both Houses.

The Commons this day gave a second reading to the Bill for the Commissioners of Accounts, and the committee is to sit upon it on Monday se'nnight, at which time they are to name the commissioners. It is agreed at the Rose, to settle those they would have on Friday se'nnight. I think they incline to shut out all the old ones, except Mr. Boyle.*

* * * *

I hear Vaughan has accused one Lynch, an Irish merchant, for holding correspondence with France, and that it was by his contrivance the hoy was stolen out of the river some time since.

The Admiralty are pressing for his execution, so I question whether he will escape.

* A part omitted relating to the accounts of the expenses of Mr. Hill, the diplomatist.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 10th, 1696.

I have the honour of two of your Grace's letters of the 5th; one was sent me by Sir Thomas Millington; I called to see him, but he was in bed, being tired with his journey. I understood he intended to wait on the King, if he found himself well enough. either at dinner-time, or after.

I waited on my Lord Portland with the letter Sir Thomas Millington brought. He read it, and took the letter, but said the King was already informed of the contents of it, Mr. Brydges having acquainted him with it.

His Lordship likewise told me of the resolutions taken to send the fleet to sea, though it was an ill time of the year, yet the safety of England and Ireland seemed to depend upon it, and hazards must be run in such extremities. I find Admiral Almonde is much of that opinion, and has undertaken to satisfy the States of the necessity of it.

The Admiralty Board and the flag officers were attending the King yesterday, and then it was resolved that Sir Cloudesley Shovel and Vice Admiral Mitchell, should go immediately to the fleet, and accordingly they are gone this morning to Portsmouth.

Mr. Russell tells me that thirty-five men-of-war are ordered towards Brest, and that twenty men-of-

war will be left in the Channel to take care of Dunkirk; their station will be in the Downs, and they will keep light cruizers, that shall be going backward and forward continually. So that I hope care is taken to prevent any sudden assault. God grant the sea be favourable to us, which we must expose ourselves to at this time of the year, when one sees little more in the day than in the night. I don't know whether the fleet will sail immediately from Spithead, though they do all they can to put themselves into a readiness, and it is agreed that is a very insignificant station.

I perceive the greatest want we have is of provisions, and the victuallers are in no condition to provide them.

We had a Dutch post this morning, but brought no French letter. I send you Mr. Prior's letter, which pretends to give the reason of it; and your Grace will likewise please to consider whether you can contribute any thing at that distance towards securing him his post of secretary to the ———* embassy. I don't know he is in any danger of losing it, for I hear of no competitor. By the account my Lord Villiers now sends, I know not whether Dyckwell or Callieres have carried their point as to the piece of news, therefore we are very silent.

After I had been with my Lord Portland to-day, my Lord Keeper sent for me to the House, and told me had some discourse with my Lord Portland

* Word illegible.

about Smith. It seems he had given him but five guineas, and he is pressing for more, which I find my Lord Portland hangs off from, on account of good husbandry. I am glad they are convinced at least, that whatever the pretensions are of that man's services, they have no other end but calling for money. However, my Lord Keeper remembering what your Grace writ to me formerly on that subject, and still keeping to his opinion, that your Grace should not be seen to give this man any thing, he proposed to my Lord Portland that he would give him twenty guineas more to stop his mouth at present, and I should furnish it, which I have undertaken, and thought to do it time enough at the rising of the House, but we sat so long, and it being Council night, my Lord was gone before I got to Whitehall, which will cost me a journey to Kensington to-morrow morning, and I'll carry that sum with me, and let my Lord know I shall have more in a readiness if he finds occasion for it.

That being my Lord Keeper's advice; and since this method is taken, it would be unadvisable to stick at a small matter, but weather it as one can, till Fenwick's business be over, and then this gentleman's supporters will go near to fail him.

As to what the Secretary says of Griebe's warrant being writ in your Grace's office, it may be so without interesting you in it; for as he came almost every morning to that time to the office, and I was attending that committee, he bespoke many war-

rants, which the clerks writ and he countersigned; and they were always sent to his office to be sealed and entered. If I could see the warrant I might tell whose hand it is. I am apt to believe my Lord Portland might bring him directions to prepare such a warrant for the King's hand; and if either of them spoke to me I might get it drawn up. It is most probable my Lord Portland carried it to the King to be signed, but Mr. Secretary having countersigned, must now please to answer for it. I am sure I shall not assist in laying it upon any body else.

The enclosed will inform your Grace what the Commons have done these two days. I think the Admiralty have escaped the affront designed them by very unreasonable and malicious men, who have shewed their good-will to-day, that no supply should be given if they could help it. But I hope they will rouse a vigour sufficient to break through their obstinate opposition, which was shewn to-night in postponing their darling bill of elections, when they hope they have drawn some well-meaning men into a delusion; and they are the more in haste for the bill, lest it should not last; besides, after that, I think some of them had a mind to go out of town. I wish they were gone.

The Princess, I hear, is not very well again.

Captain Vaughan* was executed yesterday. Notwithstanding his ———, he has helped them to those who will convict Lynch.

* The pirate.

Sir Andrew Foster was taken up yesterday, and now they are enquiring what informations there are against him. He was found concealed in the city, going by the name of Freeman.

I send your Grace a letter of Colonel Levington's; you would have had it sooner, but Mr. Harrison kept it to shew my Lord Keeper.

The Lords have done with the dispute between my Lord Steward and Lord Normanby, who are resigned to the Chancery.

I send your Grace some verses I had from Mr. Brydges, which Mr. How is said to be the author of. I am sure his prose comes very near it.

I send the stationer's bill, if your Grace please to allow it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 12th, 1696.

What I have to acquaint your Grace with is, that I carried the twenty guineas yesterday to my Lord Portland, and paid them, by his directions, to his valet-de-chambre. How he has disposed of them since I don't know, but I told my Lord Keeper this morning what I had done, who well approved of it, and he has undertaken to speak with my Lord Portland, and to take the best care he can that the matter be quieted, at least till the trial is over, for that I take to be the grand crisis.

I am told the Lords, on Thursday last, gave my Lady Mary Fenwick leave to see Sir John. It was ordered in a thin house, and it stood at first that she should go and come. It was altered afterwards, that if she went she must be shut up with him. I hear she intended to go to-day, but whether it be so I know not, but take it for granted, if she undertakes it, it is to concert how the honest advice given her may be put into practice, which we shall be more enlightened in on Tuesday next.

Captain Jourdain is come up to town, and Thompson with him, but this last I have not seen. The other brought me a parcel of letters, which he says came lately over in a French chaloupe, but they are from young Nowell, Griffin, and some others of those at Calais, and I see nothing more in them than in the former, and some are of an old date; however I keep them. Jourdain tells me further, that Thompson coming here to old Nowell was kept up close for a day and a half. He understood he was sent for up to be a conductor to somebody that was to go to France. He tells me, this morning, that he finds it is young Bromfield who escaped from the messenger. Thompson has not seen him yet, but he is to meet him at Sandwich; and to that end both of them are gone out of town, and they intend to intercept the gentleman at that place, and have him secured.

That there may be the least failure in it, I gave Mr. Manley notice, who is down about Folkestone,

that he have a particular eye upon the coast at that time, and not let any body escape that comes with, ——* or is otherwise designing to go over.

Jourdain expecting I should bear their charges, and Sir Basil Dixwell speaking to me about it, I saw it could not be well avoided, and so I gave him 5*l.*, and would not exceed it, though it was a little pressed. I suppose this will be the last service they will be put upon of this kind.

Mr. Manley went down with orders from my Lord Portland, to put a stop to this management, since so little is come of it, and it has been stopped only to see what this journey would produce. If Bromfield should now be taken, I know nothing else can be done with him, but return him to Newgate.

One of the messengers being advised to search a weaver's house in Spitalfields for Grascomb, who is in a proclamation, he went thither this afternoon. He missed his man, but found the late Bishop of Ely, who went by the name of Harris. He happened only to dine there, but it seems his lodging is in Lincoln's Inn-fields. He writ a letter immediately to Dr. Windebank, who brought it to the office. I found a mention in it of the leave he had to go beyond sea, and that he never was in France; he desires the Doctor to speak to me or to Sir William Trumbull, that he might be discharged. I satisfied him I could do nothing in it, and I hear since Sir

* A word wanting.

William has set him at liberty, and I find it begins to be talked of. There has been a committee at the office this evening, where were my Lord Keeper, my Lord Privy Seal, my Lord Steward, my Lord Portland, and Mr. Secretary. It has been to examine some who are taken up as accomplices with the Frenchman, who was lately seized in Holland.* It seems there was a letter found upon him, directed to one Newell, a Frenchman and a broker somewhere towards Wapping, in which was a bill of exchange, or rather a letter of credit, drawn upon one Valvin, a merchant here, which was to be delivered to the Frenchman when he came over.

This Van Newell has been taken up, and two Frenchmen more that lodged in his house. They can't get him to own who this Valvin is to whom the letter of credit was directed, or to know any thing of the Frenchman that was coming over, or what his business was. He is committed to Newgate, but the two that lodged with him, having given some account for what reason they are here, will be in the custody of a messenger, till further enquiry be made about them.

Mackye, the riding surveyor at Harwich, who was employed in finding out and apprehending Van Newell, tells me he has examined the letters and papers, and apprehends there was a design laid for running away with a ship, and that the Frenchman who is seized, was coming over about it with some

* On the charge of designing to assassinate William.

others. But my Lord Portland, he says, thinks there is much more in it, and it is not to be doubted but his Lordship is best informed.

Mr. Hampden has attempted to cut his own throat, he did it on Thursday last with a razor, as I am told: it was soon after discovered, and they say his wind-pipe is sewn up again. How long he is like to live after it, I know not; but the report runs, that he speaks, and has sent my Lady Mazarine advices of repentance. He was intending to stand for Knight of the Shire, in Sir Richard Atkins's place. My Lord Wharton sets up one Peele; whether that increased his melancholy I know not.

Your Grace will see by the account of Parliament affairs, that it is now resolved to raise the supply by a capitation. It is thought a piece of management, to begin with an excise upon live cattle, to introduce this and make it better go down; but sometimes accidents are made refined policies, as I think it is in this case. I rather believe our managers, however pretty it was in the notion, thought it would fail in the execution, and that no certainty would be built upon it.

At least I think that might be a great inducement to some gentlemen to be very forward in closing with it, who have shewed no stomach hitherto to any effectual tax. But yet the disposition they are in towards it, may help very much to make it so. Perhaps, after all, they may have reserves that the bringing in all people to be taxed, may spread a

discontent further; but, on the other side, it is not to be expected that five millions should be raised within the year, if all who are rateable did not come in to pay their share. I know not how they will succeed at first in this experiment, but I believe it may be the future method of taxing, and by degrees it will lay the burden equally, and the Exchequer is not like to want their whole sum this year by the means of the bills Mr. Montague proposes, which will be issued for the whole sum, and dispersed into the counties, as if, the taxes don't come in to answer them, it will be upon the Parliament to make a provision for it next session, when in all probability the difficulties will be over about the corn.

The Dutch post is not yet arrived.

Two of the Frenchmen I now hear are discharged, and the broker is only in a messenger's hands.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December, 15th, 1696.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 12th. If there be any thing designed by those who have the management of Smith, it will soon appear, and if it does, I hope those who bring it on, will not find their account in it, or lay concealed under it.

The person Mrs. Scott means is Mr. Palmes his lady, whom she talks of as one zealously concerned

for your Grace, but in what particulars is not explained to me. I have employed her again to speak to Read, and bring him to me, but she has not yet done it. What I would know of Read is, whether he has heard more of that Lord's management, and would be ready to declare what he has already told me of it, or has learnt since.

When the Admiralty attended the King on Sunday last, he was very positive for the fleets going immediately towards Brest, with almost all their strength, and he is for their cruizing longer than the Admiralty think it adviseable at this time of the year. I suppose they will soon sail and appear there, but I believe it will not be long before they return to Torbay, and God grant they come in, in as good a condition as they go out.

The King thinks this the critical time for any service the fleet can do him, and if the present design the French have can be defeated, that the peace will ensue upon it, and that upon this success the whole depends. I suppose, likewise, he depends upon his intelligence from Prince de Vaudemont, that there is nothing as yet intended on that side.

The Dutch letters arrived on Sunday, in time enough to send them to my Lord Portland, while the Cabinet was sitting. I have had three back since, and they are here enclosed. There were none from Brest or Dunkirk, which I have taken notice of to Monsieur Jurieu, that this is a time one would least wish the correspondents should fail in.

The advice boats the Admiralty employ have not, that I hear of, brought them any person, either from sea or land, to give them any certain intelligence. But in general they say they confirm the advices of the preparations both at Brest and Dunkirk, at which last place four ships were come into the roads, and five more were within.

The Weymouth and Dover have had a good rencontre with the Chevalier de Amfreville, commanding a ship with 48 guns mounted, but built to carry 60. They met him somewhere on the coast of Brittany. The Dover was the nearest him and first engaged, and the Weymouth coming up the French ship ran ashore and soon after sunk. About half the men, with the commander, were drowned, and the rest, they say, were taken out of the water. This advice is very particular, but I don't hear it comes from either of the captains, but the account hereof is sent to Sir William Trumbull. I am told these ships were sent out upon a secret expedition to interrupt the French Canada fleet, but I don't find whether they are yet come or not, it is suspected only they are got home.

Mr. Hampden died on Saturday ;* he spoke and sent advices to his friends about a future state, or the Bishop of Salisbury, who was with him, has made some addition to it. He told his brother Ellis he had thought of this thing for some time, but wished he had thought of it longer. His greatest

* He is described by Evelyn as a scholar and a fine gentleman.

concern seemed to be for his little boy of six months old, that he had nothing to leave him. But his mother eased him of that care.

My Lord Montgomery* surrendered himself this morning to my Lord Chief Justice, who has committed him to Newgate pursuant to the proclamation. The reason he comes in now is to prevent his outlawry, which he understood would be perfected within a day or two, but Mr. Baker tells me it could not have been under a month.

My Lady Westmoreland bids me tell your Grace that my Lord Cardigan is ill again; that which begun to break out in his thighs is struck in again, and he complains of his stomach. A physician was carried down to him this morning.

I heard a rumour on Friday or Saturday, that the King had named his Plenipotentiaries, viz. my Lord Pembroke, Lord Villiers, and Sir Joseph Williamson. But I did not know I could depend of it enough to mention it by last post, and since it was ordered to be in the Gazette. Though they are in such haste to publish them, yet I believe they are not in the same for sending them away.

I understand, from my Lord Pembroke, the King has intimated as much to him, and has appointed him another time to enter into particulars with him. I took the occasion to speak to my Lord about Mr. Prior, who I knew was his friend before, and he is so to that degree as to take it well of those who ap-

* Implicated in the late conspiracy.

pear for him. If your Grace thinks of no better way to do Mr. Prior a good office at this time, if you please to write a line in his favour to my Lord Pembroke, it will give him an opportunity to press it further to the King, if there should be need of it, when he understands the King was pleased formerly to promise it upon your Grace's recommendation. It is not that I fear a competition, or that my Lord Pembroke will be slack in taking care of Prior, but I would have him sensible your Grace is concerned for him, and he can't know it so satisfactory any other way as he would by my Lord Privy Seal.

Mr. Yard and I have both mentioned him to Sir Joseph Williamson as for a matter already settled, and by your Grace's procurement, and he seems very well to like the character of the man.

I shall give your Grace but an imperfect account of the House of Commons having paid my attendance upon the Lords, a summoned witness, till ten at night.

Sir John Fenwick's trial is begun, but I can't say it is half gone through. Sergeant Wright and Mr. Pratt, the counsel for the bill, are both able, well chosen men, and I think a pretty near match for the other two. They go on with their evidence by the same steps it proceeded in the House of Commons, and the same objections are made against allowing several parts, and those occasion every whit as long debates, and every body is turned out in the meantime. The first time they were ordered to with-

draw, was upon the proposing Captain Porter should give an account of Clancy's practices: * that was at last admitted without a division.

The next obstruction given was, whether Goodman's deposition should be read; this was looked upon as the material point in the House of Commons. I know not whether any conjecture may be made that the final decision will be answerable to this determination, but it was carried in the affirmative for reading the depositions by twenty voices, there being seventy-three Lords against fifty-three.

I don't particularly know who were on each side, but it was observed there were some Bishops against reading the paper, and fourteen for it, and that the Duke of Somerset, Duke of Ormond, and Lord President, voted with the smaller number.

The next point was to hear what the Grand Jury remembered of Goodman's evidence against Fenwick, which was given up after a very short contest.

And the next was, what the Petty Jury upon Cook's trial remembered was sworn by Goodman in relation to the meeting at the King's Head. When they were withdrawn upon that, some Lords began to think they had sat long enough for one day. Others were for going to the end of the evidence on one side, but the giving themselves ——† prevailed over any other consideration. And they adjourned

* A barber who acted as Lady Mary Fenwick's agent in endeavouring to bribe off the witness Porter.

† A word wanting, probably "ease."

this debate and the rest of the trial till to-morrow morning, and it is well if they can then go through with both sides of the evidence, for I hear there are ten or twelve witnesses in behalf of the prisoner; to what points I know not.

My Lady Mary Fenwick and Mrs. Lawson, I observed, were all the while at the trial, upon a corner of the Lords' Bench.

We want a Dutch post.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 17th, 1796.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 14th, and waited this morning on my Lord Keeper to know what directions he would give me, and let him know that any money is ready he thinks necessary for quieting this business. He promised to take the first opportunity of speaking to my Lord Portland, and that he would send to me when there was occasion.

Mrs. Scott alarming me as if something were now brewing, and that Mrs. Mortimer would endeavour to wait on the King on Sunday with some papers she has to deliver him, I supposed her intelligence came from Read, and therefore I desired to speak with him, who was with me this evening. He tells me he has not seen Smith these three weeks, and then he talked as if he was resolved to be quiet, for

he had an estate fallen to him, and he would trouble himself no further. I take this to be when he had his grand supply. I don't find this man so intimate with him as had been represented to me, or that he knows much of the countenance Lord Monmouth gives Smith, but hears, I know not from whom, that he has often dined with him at Parson's Green on a Sunday. He says he shall know more by Mrs. Mortimer's son, whom he pretends a great acquaintance with, and that he saw the mother this evening. She talks of something she has to acquaint him with, but she won't tell him what it is. But he don't believe your Grace is concerned in it, besides she speaks very slightingly of Smith. She would have this man find out Captain Sognes, commander of a Dutch yacht, to the King. I have advised him to be diligent about her, to see what she is driving at. Mrs. Scott has insinuated to me some charge she has been in supplying this man. I am apt to believe he may want it, but I doubt whether she has or can furnish him; however I understand the meaning of it, and believe one time or another your Grace may think fit to give them some small thing, but at present I can't believe it advisable. I don't know what they may be able to discover, and what use one may make of it; in which case it will be fit they be able to make oath, that they have no reward given or promised them.

My Lord Keeper has heard that Sir John Fenwick is in great doubt whether he should make use of the

advice sent him, fearing it may only turn more to his prejudice, which agrees with the notion your Grace has of it. There appears nothing like it yet. I know not what may happen, if the Lords order a second reading, which will be seen to-morrow, for in these two days the counsel for and against the bill have gone through with their charge and defence, and all witnesses have been heard. Sir John Fenwick's counsel began yesterday with a petition from him, that Clancey the barber might be sent for to give evidence, he being a prisoner in execution; they were bid to withdraw upon it, some Lords shewed themselves very inclinable to it, but the Judges' opinion being asked, they desired to see the record of his conviction, and having consulted upon it, some time after my Lord Chief Justice Holt reported they were all unanimous that Clancey could be no witness in any matter relating to the judgment against himself; but whether that rendered him infamous, so as to disable him from being a witness in any cause whatsoever, there were seven of the Judges of that opinion, for reasons he gave, and my Lord Chief Justice enlarged upon; but one doubted and desired longer time to resolve. They pressed to know who that was, and finding it was my Lord Chief Justice himself, with a great many compliments, they courted him to tell the reasons of his doubts, but he modestly and prudently waived it, saying, they were not of that moment but he could subscribe to the opinion of his brethren.

The counsel for the bill went on with their evidence; the Petty Jury at Cook's trial were heard. I was called upon to give an account by what applications Sir John's trial came to be so long deferred, when it had been so early resolved, in which my Lord Steward came in for his share; and Sir John Fenwick's letter from Romney was allowed to be read, which was more than the House of Commons consented to. After a short recapitulation of the evidence produced, the counsel for the prisoner went on with their defence.

Sir Thomas Powis and Sir Bartholomew Shower were both long to tediousness in their introductions, and not having done till eight o'clock, the Lords adjourned hearing the witnesses to this day. Understanding they were many, they begun with them this morning. The first were the master of the tavern* and his servants, who swore with a little more reserve than formerly, for they did not disown but Goodman might come into that company, yet none of them remembered to have seen him there. To discredit Porter, they brought the records of his conviction for the death of the Scotch lieutenant-colonel, and the widows of Keys and Cranbourne who were executed, to make a silly proof that Porter promised to preserve their husbands, and that he expected such reward as to be able to live as well as ever he had done. The chief battery was against Goodman's credit; that he had robbed on the highway and was

* The King's Head.

a blasphemer, both which were undeniably proved, and the record was brought again about his attempting to poison two dukes. It was likewise objected against Porter, that he swore otherwise at former trials, than he did now before the Lords, as to the time he saw Charnock after his return from France, which he told the Lords was in July, soon after he was committed for the riot; and in the printed trials, it is said, it was after his discharge out of Newgate, which was in September. The short-hand writers of those trials were sworn, and they did not agree in their accounts of that particular, which helped it off. All objections were well answered, and precedents fully asserted by Serjeant Wright, who has managed this cause with great applause. Mr. Pratt, while he was going on with the part left to him, was taken ill, so that he could not proceed, but the Serjeant took it up with no disadvantage to that or himself, and made a sharp conclusion to shew how fit this cause was for the cognizance of the Parliament, and how much the safety of the King and Government was concerned that such crimes should not go unpunished. The counsel for the prisoner held on with their reply till nine at night. So that the Lords have adjourned this debate till the morrow. They are very exact in calling over the House every night, to see that none are missing to whom leave was not given.

My Lord Steward, who had been there all day on Tuesday, and happened to go away after they had

resolved to adjourn, and before his name was called, was ordered to be taken into custody, my Lord Rochester joining with my Lord Normanby in support of their discipline, and leave was asked for him next day to come into the House.

Yesterday we had a Dutch post. I send your Grace an abstract of the letters, but the originals are gone to Kensington.

Sir Robert Rich tells me our fleet stays only for a wind to sail.

The Countess Dowager of Carlisle died on Tuesday last.

The account of the House of Commons shews I have been but little there these two days.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Dec. 19, 1696.

The Bill of Attainder against Sir John Fenwick was read yesterday a second time in the House of Lords, after a debate that lasted till twelve at night; before they entered into it, Sir John was sent for, to know if he had any thing more to say, which he had not, but thanked their Lordships for their patience in the long hearing they had vouchsafed him, and submitted himself to their justice.

The debate for the bill was chiefly managed by my Lord Tankerville, Lord Monmouth, Bishop of

Salisbury, Lord Haversham, Lord Cornwallis, and some others. I should not omit naming likewise my Lord Wharton, and Lord Privy Seal, and Duke of Bolton; the chiefs who argued against the bill, were the Duke of Leeds, Lord Rochester, Lord Nottingham, and Lord Ferrers.

There divided upon the question, seventy-three for reading the bill, and fifty-five against it, of which number there were thirteen Bishops for the bill, and eight on the other side; of the last, there were three more remarkable than the rest, it not being expected from them, viz.: the Archbishop of York, Dr. Kidder, Bishop of Bath and Wells, and Dr. Ironsides, of Hereford; on the other side, two Dukes were for the second reading of the bill, who had been against the admitting of Goodman's written information, viz.: the Duke of Somerset and Duke of Ormond. The Marquis of Carmarthen voted against his father, and the Earl of Torrington with him, against the bill.

This bill, it seems, does not require being committed, the Lords therefore ordered the third reading on Tuesday next, and adjourned to that time.

My Lord Cornwallis moved that Sir John Fenwick should be brought down that day; my Lord Wharton thought it sufficient he should have notice the bill was read a second time, and when the third reading was appointed, and it might be time enough to send for him when he made any application in that behalf, which was ordered accordingly, and

that his counsel and solicitor have access to him in the meantime, and nobody else to be admitted. Whether any thing be now in agitation that may occasion his coming down on Tuesday, I can't yet learn, but this is the critical time for it.

We had yesterday a Spanish post, it brought only one letter from Mr. Stanhope, which I carried this morning to the King, who enquired after your health. I send your Grace the copy of it, which you will please to return, and it will come time enough to answer it by the post of Tuesday se'nnight.

Sir Cloudesley Shovel is got out to St. Helens. It is expected he would sail to-day, if the wind coming so much northerly has not prevented it. We want a Dutch mail.

Sir Edward Seymour has lent the Exchequer 10,000*l.* in money, and offered to furnish them for 10,000*l.* in cattle to the victualler. I know not whether he may not change his mind upon Sir Thomas Littleton's bringing it something reflectingly into a speech this day, which I was surprised to hear from one of the Treasury, and it was taken ill.

Mr. Papillon has been furnished with 3,000*l.* which he carried to Smithfield yesterday to buy cattle, and there was need enough of it, the ships being but scantily victualled, and I think they can put out a greater number, if they had provision ready for them.

My Lord Monmouth yesterday shocked my Lord

Jefferies, who, making his observations on some iniquities in the late times, happened to jumble together the Jefferies, Barton, and Graham, which Lord Jefferies complained of, and when the House was rising, my Lord Privy Seal took so far notice of it, that a quarrel might be prevented. The matter fell by my Lord Monmouth's saying he meant no reflection on that Lord, and he asked the House pardon, if he had said any thing that gave them offence.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Dec. 24th, 1696.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter by Mr. Arden, who arrived last night. I shall give him what assistance I can as to your concerns with the Bank, and further press for a supply of money; the succeeding there is, I am afraid, almost out of prospect at present, the publick services being near at a stand for want of ready money, and the loan goes on but slowly.

I hear they are now applying to particular persons to try how far their assistance may be engaged. They have hopes of getting 10,000*l.* from the Duke of Newcastle. Mr. Papillon has been promised 20,000*l.* for the victualling, where there is the most immediate want; he has been put off till Saturday next, and now it is deferred again till Tuesday.

Mr. Brydges has been here to-day, and I have told him the history of Smith. It was not without foundation what he writ to your Grace concerning him, and it was not unknown to some others of your friends. But as they resolved to watch it, so they thought it most adviseable to say nothing of it to your Grace, since they were not assured the matter would break out, and they would not unnecessarily give you the uneasiness of it, which is always increased by uncertainties, especially where they could not expect you should give any directions how it might be prevented. But Providence has been the best conductor of this affair, and shewed how much the innocent are under her care.

I told your Grace in my last, that I was in the dark as to my Lord Carlisle's motives for asking Sir John Fenwick the question he proposed. I since understood he did it to expose a Lord * who shewed himself a vehement prosecutor, at the same time he was his friendly adviser, and in hopes to draw off others from being led by reasons that proceeded from sinister and by-ends. The bringing this out was concerted by my Lady and her nephew, without the privity of Sir John, which made him answer at first beside the purpose. My Lord Carlisle would then have let it fall, but others would not permit it, who knew something of the secret as well as he, though there was one part of it which was kept a

* Lord Monmouth.

greater mystery than all the rest, and I believe did not take air till my Lady Mary produced it, and that was the paper of particular instructions how Sir John Fenwick should at least give a plausible turn to his accusation, and how each man might be charged. I don't meet with any one who can give a clear account of it, and in excuse, they say it was so ill read by the clerk, that they know not what to make of it; but, as I am told, it is that my Lord Godolphin should be charged with a correspondence with the late Queen, and to prove it, the Earls of Portland and Romney were to be examined what they knew of intercepted letters, that had been shewn to the King, both as sent to and from that Lord.

As to your Grace, I think the King was likewise to be appealed to, whether he did not know the secret reasons of your going out of your employment; and some transactions which passed afterwards, as to letters to be produced by Captain Smith, and something that Mrs. Mortimer was to say, was the subject of another of the papers.

Lord Marlborough was to be pressed upon the reasons the King had to part with him, and what had followed upon his discontent.

Mr. Russell was to be examined on oath, whether he did not see David Floyd both here and at Cadiz, and what passed between them. And I know not what proof was to be made of God knows whose

letters that were sent into France, which were sent back, and ready to be produced.*

This is, in short, what I can learn of these instructions; there were only two letters for names, as D. S., L. M., &c., which my Lady Mary explained. Two of the papers were copies from what the Duchess of Norfolk brought, who took back the originals. The other was an original, and agreed with that your Grace has seen, which I take to be the first paper delivered. All this was opened on Tuesday night by my Lady Mary, who was then called in; but I did not hear of it then.

Yesterday the scene was opened further; my Lord Wharton, who is gone this morning to Woborne, said he would send your Grace a full account from thence, and put it into the Maidenhead bag. If I could be sure there would be no failure of his letter, I should forbear writing what I have but an imperfect information of; but it is better you should have that than none.

I shall first, therefore, acquaint your Grace that the Lords sat till nine; the Bill of Attainder was passed between seven and eight. It was carried

* This account is very nearly accurate, and of the three papers sent by Lord Monmouth to Lady Mary Fenwick, it is only necessary to say, that the tendency of all was to urge the prisoner to make good his charges against Lords Shrewsbury, Marlborough, and Godolphin, as well as against Admiral Russell; to point out the best means of doing so, at least plausibly; and to direct him, not in his defence against a charge of high treason, but in blasting the character of others. The last paper was a little more guarded than the others, taking care to urge truth and sincerity when the object was evidently calumny.

only by a majority of seven, and one would wonder it passed at all, when one considers who they were that voted against it, particularly all the Lords Justices, who had voices, except the Archbishop of Canterbury, who spoke for the bill to admiration.

My Lord Godolphin being of that opinion was the less wondered at, since it was consistent with his former vote against the second reading. But my Lord Privy Seal, Lord Steward, and Lord Chamberlain, renounced their former vote, as also did the Duke of Ormond, Duke of Somerset, Lord Willoughby of Eresby, Lord Fitzwalter, and some others.

The bishops stuck as they were; the Prince and Lord Bradford stayed it now and voted for the bill. Lord Chesterfield, who would have been against it, was absent.

The lords who were against the bill, thought to have cast a reproach upon the bishops for differing from them. But my Lord of Canterbury wiped it off, and justified their opinions from Scripture, reason, and whatever else was proper to support it. The former days' proceedings did not hinder, but the Earl of Monmouth spoke and voted for the bill.

When that business was over, the Duchess of Norfolk, who then attended, was called in. She behaved herself with great prudence and address; she appeared to be an unwilling witness, and yet left little room to suspect her sincerity in what she said. As soon as she was sworn, she was asked whether

she had formerly seen my Lady Mary Fenwick's papers, which were shewn her. She believed she had not. Being desired to cast her eye upon them, and consider what they contained which might bring them better to her remembrance, she waved that, both as it would take up their time, and not enable her to make a more satisfactory answer. She supposed they might be copies of some advices she had given to my Lady Mary, which she handed only to her as a friend concerned for a relation in distress, and being intended for another's use. She did not so far look into them as to be able to remember the import of them. She owned there were two or three several papers. My Lord Normanby took notice, since she knew so little of them, it implied she had them from somebody else, and desired she might tell from whom. After defending herself a little on that point, she named the Earl of Monmouth. When he thought it his turn to ask questions, and in the heat of doing it, it was thought he discomposed the concert between them, if there were any. He asked whether any paper he gave her were of his own handwriting. She answered she thought she knew his hand, and believed it was not. He pressed it further, whether he gave her a paper that was not of his handwriting; she said she would not be positive whether it were or not, but she was confident if he writ any of those papers, it was not in his ordinary hand.

He put her in mind of being upon her oath, and advised her therefore to be cautious of what she said. And she assured him she would have great regard to the truth of what she should say there, whether she were under that obligation or not.

He desired to know whether he had not told her that he knew no better way for Sir John than to be ingenuous in his confession of what he knew, and whether the first occasion he had of speaking to her about Sir John Fenwick were not to be satisfied by her means, whether Sir John had accused him, as was reported, both which she owned, and he produced a letter of my Lady Mary Fenwick's in answer to that enquiry.

Others desired to be satisfied where were the original papers. The Duchess answered she had returned them as was directed, after they had been communicated by my Lady Mary, who had them copied while she was present, but she did not know by whom, but my Lady Mary had given an account it was by one Mr. Symonds.

Mrs. Lawson, it seems, came sometimes with the Duchess of Norfolk, to my Lady Mary, and was present at some of these transactions. She has not yet appeared, and since she may be of use to explain these matters, the Lords have referred a further enquiry to their next meeting, and the three ladies are then to attend, but they have given them a long day.

The Lords being adjourned to the 7th of January, which is pretty extraordinary, so many bills being depending.

How Lord Monmouth will wipe himself clean in the interim I know not. But people are possessed with a great dislike to this sort of practising with prisoners. He still endeavours to insinuate that his was only a general advice for a confession, and that they have raked up a parcel of particulars from other people's discourses to father it upon him.

Mr. Brydges tells me he had it from my Lord Raby, that my Lord Monmouth would have sent for Smith, but knows not where to find him. The producing him now, if it be his intention, will not be very formidable. I suppose it is not for his credit or interest to give that confirmation, as if he had been looking out evidence to second Sir John.

My Lord Montgomery has not been so well advised to surrender for preventing his outlawry, or the trick has been returned him, as his friends say, for it now appears the outlawry has been perfected six or seven days before he came in. And he has no remedy but by leave to bring a writ of error, which they say too will not lie, unless there be proof he has been beyond sea.

We have no account of Sir Cloudesley Shovel, more than that he passed by Plymouth on Sunday last, with a fair wind. There is a report in the city, but I know not on what authority, that Pontis is out, and has sailed for the West Indies.

I suppose Mr. How is now in Gloucestershire; I believe he will make your Grace a visit. I think he will not be wanting in any personal respects, though it is pretty hard to reconcile him to the publick. I see your Grace has given Mr. Arden a memorandum about the grant of *Pirates.** It is not yet passed; I have had the bill by me some time, and know not whether I should lay it before the King. We have had a few things a long while in his closet, which he has been put in mind of too; but I think he expects we should sit still while your Grace is absent.

I send a list of the voters yesterday, whether it be without fault I know not.

I desire your Grace will let us have a few more passes.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Dec. 26th, 1696.

Neither of the Houses being now sitting, there is little to trouble your Grace with at present, and the foreign post is not arrived.

I saw my Lord Portland last night, who I believe would not be sorry that their House should exert a vigour in going on where they left off, and prosecuting that matter as far as it will go.

I was this morning with my Lord Keeper and

* The word very doubtful.

Mr. Russell, who don't think the business will drop. They believe my Lord Normanby and the Duke of Leeds will push it, and think it better to be in that management than that others who have been of the same side with him, I mean as to what passed above board, should appear too early against him,* and shew they believe him capable of such practices before they hear them proved.

I have acquainted them that I should be provided with questions which could not fail to draw out the truth, which I would put into their hands, that they might make what use of them they thought fit. I told my Lord Keeper the only apprehension I could have at present was lest during this long recess of the Lords, Smith might be played off at the House of Commons, where they are not half apprised of the contrivances laid, and the trumping up him might make a colourable excuse for the other, he said he would consider of it, and advise with Mr. Russell and Mr. Montague about it; but he thinks this lord has his head and his hands too full to set new projects on foot. I hope so too, and yet I should be glad all passages may be stopped his rage might break through at.

Read was with me this evening, and tells me he met Smith on Tuesday last, who told him again he would concern himself no more, that he had a cousin who would pay all his debts, and he was resolved to be quiet.

* Meaning Lord Monmouth.

We have no account of Sir Cloudesley Shovel, more than that he passed by Falmouth on Monday in the evening. The Eagle, one of the third-rates, and a fifth-rate frigate were come in thither; they were disordered in their masts at going out, but would soon be refitted again. It blew pretty brisk on Saturday and Sunday; it has been much milder weather since, and we hope very soon to hear of their safe return, and that it will not be thought fit to expose them any more to the like hazards, though Sir Cloudesley says there is no storm so bad as one from the House of Commons.

I have just now the honour of your Grace's letter of the 24th, and have sent the enclosed to my Lord Keeper. It is very melancholy news that your Grace is so affected with the change of weather. I would to God you could find an interval to get out of that bleak hole, you would not be so sensible of these sudden alterations in our milder climate.

Whatever success Mr. Methuen has in his pretensions, I am very glad your Grace has favoured him so far as to shew your good opinion of him. I know he will put as high a value upon it as upon the employment. He was with me this morning, and tells me my Lord Sunderland espouses his interest very zealously. Nay, he has gone so far with him as to make him promise that if he obtains it for him he shall not decline it; for he is not insensible that as it is an honourable post so it is a chargeable one, and the more for succeeding Sir Charles Porter;

Besides the other difficulties that may spring up from the seeds of faction and animosities he has sown in that country, which might be very much increased according to the temper of the person the King shall design to be chief governor there; and he should think his satisfaction very incomplete, if he had not the hopes of acting under your Grace.

Mr. Montague is entirely his friend, and undertook to speak to my Lord Keeper: I believe he did it this morning, for I know he was expected there. But Mr. Methuen has not neglected going to my Lord himself, and desired his favour with all deference and resignation to his good pleasure, if he had, or should think of any more deserving; I understand my Lord received him very kindly, he told him he had been thinking who would be proper, but he had not yet mentioned it to any body. There were one or two occurred to him, but he doubted whether they would accept it if it were offered to them. He excused it to him that he could not say he had been in his thoughts, looking upon him as one that had addicted himself another way, but he now promised him, that he would take no resolutions without first communicating them to him.

I know not whether one is to guess from hence that my Lord has other inclinations, but if it be so, I take Mr. Methuen to be too modest and too discreet to thwart them, and he seemed very well prepared for all events, as having hopes, at least, that one who could come near such a station would not if this fails, fall much below it. I can't but think

it will be hard to find any other who is every way so well qualified for it.

I did not know of Mrs. Scott's writing before. I shall preach patience to her till what your Grace gives her may be a charity and not a debt, for these are but poor services, and I shall civilly desire her she will let them alone.

It is feared the Woolwich, a fourth rate frigate, is lost, she has not been heard of since she was sent with the Monk to look after the East bound fleet, and they were separated in a storm.

The enclosed is from Sir Joseph Williamson. I am glad your Grace allows the King to take his own way as to the despatch of what is now depending. I am only sorry I sent any thing to Kensington, since it lies there embargoed, notwithstanding his Majesty has been put in mind of it by favourites. It is a little disappointment to those who find their business undone, and I believe Sir John* Trumbull's office was somewhat more encouraged during his long sickness. But this gives me no uneasiness at all, but I am heartily concerned for your Grace's health, and when you grow weary of your office, it is then only I shall wish myself out of it.

* So written.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

29th of December, 1696.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 26th. It is pretty hard to tell beforchand to what purposes Smith shall be produced, if that be intended. I was in hopes my Lord Keeper might have sent you the copies of my Lady Mary Fenwick's papers,* he having that power only, and then you would have understood the purport of them, for I don't find any body else that does. I am inclined to believe that this man may be represented as knowing more than will appear, only to raise the curiosity of sending for him; and then, let his story go as far as it will, they hope it may bear some dirt, and that is all they care for. But if there be forgery too in the case, it is probable it has been practised in the Fleet, where Smith has been a prisoner with the renowned Young.

We had a report this morning that Lord Mordaunt† was yesterday with my Lord Chief Justice and Mr. Secretary Trumbull, and talked about making out what was contained in Fenwick's paper. Ned Clark met with it in Westminster-hall, and has since spoke with Mr. Secretary, who has satisfied him it is not true, but says he only spoke of penny post letters, wherein people offer to discover how he came to be set upon by Chelsea College, and some

* Somers had sent them to the Duke, but under the strictest injunctions to secrecy, as they were entrusted to his care alone by the peers.

† The Earl of Monmouth.

other designs against him. So that I find the world is to be amused with I know not what plots against his person and reputation, and perhaps it will be assigned as the cause of his vigilance to detect all practices against the Government.

Mr. Brydges tells me he hears he was with my Lord Chief Justice yesterday in the evening, but it was in the evening with other company whom the Chief Justice desired to tarry. He fell into a rambling discourse of the injury done him by the aspersion of the two ladies, intermixing it, too, with reflections upon other people, and told what the King said to him last spring of the disorder the fleet was in, and that he would put him at the head of the Admiralty, to bring things into a better posture, and talked as if he was going to Newgate for some business. In short they thought he talked like a disturbed and distempered man. I hear of him in other conversations, that he denies the giving any papers or particular advices, that he rails at the Duchess (of Norfolk), says she is perjured and he will prove it, and his Lady does the same, and yet has sent to the Duchess to know when she may wait on her. So that no stone is to be left unturned to bring this matter off one way or another; and some are to be disposed for public consideration to let the prosecution fall. If they do it, I hope they will be satisfied, that he be first made to understand he receives a grace and not bestows one. He was with the King on Sunday near two hours. I don't believe

he has convinced his Majesty that he has kept within due bounds in this matter.

We had a Dutch post yesterday, and another to-day. I send your Grace the extracts of both, the originals went to Kensington, not that they deserve it, but because of the *criticalness* of the time.

I sent likewise a letter from Mr. Stanhope, whereof a copy is enclosed, which gives an ill account of the King of Spain's health. I perceive the King has something to send thither, for I have directions to stop the Spanish packet-boat till further order. I send a letter from Lisbon which makes us apprehensive for Neville's Squadron.

Sir Cloudesley Shovel, I hear, is returned upon our coast, or rather he has not been able to brave it to get over to the French side. The Admiralty have letters from him from off the Lizard ; I wish he was somewhere well in port, for the wind is now high and easterly. A Dutch ship of seventy guns, I hear, is come into Falmouth disabled.

Captain Kerr, one of the cruizers, sent an express to the Admiralty on Sunday, giving them an account that he had taken two barques lately come out of Brest, by which he is informed that Pontis sailed the 18th or 20th instant, towards the West Indies, with eight men-of-war only, and upwards of thirty other vessels. He came within sight of our fleet, after he had learnt this news, and I don't hear he concerned himself to inform them of it.

Mr. Finch, of the House of Commons, lies dangerously ill, it was reported this morning that he was

dead. Another member, one Sir William Williams, of Carnarvonshire, who died lately, has left an estate valued at 3,000*l.* per year to Sir Bourchier Wray's two sons for their lives, and the reversion of it to the Crown. They say my Lord Carmarthen has asked for it already.

Some information was given towards the end of last week, as if a design were laid to remove Sir John Fenwick out of Newgate, whereupon the persons were changed who had the custody of him, and a guard was placed near the prison.

The great Seal of Ireland is put into commission. The despatch, I hear, goes away this night for the three puny Judges in the second courts there. These were pitched upon on the opposition given to include the Lord Chief Justice Pyne.

I asked my Lord Ranelagh to-day who he thought would be Chancellor; he believed Mr. Methuen stood fairest for it, but that my Lord Keeper was inclined to one Vernon, a noted Chancery practiser, who married Sir Anthony Keck's daughter.

Mr. Methuen has not spoken to my Lord Keeper since; he leaves it to Mr. Montague, who has not yet had an opportunity for it.

It is intended Mr. Secretary shall move the House to bring in a Bill that those that are in Newgate on account of the assassination, as Counter, Cassels, Chambers, and some others, shall not have the benefit of their Habeas Corpus, there being one positive witness against them, viz. Porter; but there is not another to bring them on their trial.

The King was retired yesterday, keeping a strict observance of the day the Queen died.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

2nd of January, 1696-7.

We had a Dutch post yesterday ; the letters of advice are gone to Kensington. I send your Grace an extract of them, and the Admiralty has another as far as they are concerned. I add a letter of Mr. Prior's, which speaks of the advances towards a peace. I don't find our plenipotentiaries think of a journey so soon as those at Paris do. Sir Joseph Williamson is now come abroad again ; he tells me this morning that the warrants for their Privy Seals are not yet ordered, and till that be despatched they know not what equipages are to be provided, which yet will take up time, especially their coaches. Mr. Secretary has sent to him for the copies of some things prepared for the Congress at Cologne ; we being then (as it is now) parties in the war ; and talks to him of a draught of instructions. But he thinks before those are drawn, they should be sent for to attend the King, and that it might be understood what is intended to be their business. He very much wishes your Grace were in town, both in concern for your health, and upon this particular occasion, which he thinks would be better expedited if you were here.

I was with my Lord Keeper this morning ; he will speak to my Lord Romney about the Pirates Bill that the King may be moved for my carrying it to Kensington, he not thinking it so proper to go by the other office. I told him of Penn's letter ; the account he has from Bromsgrove is, that Penn's wife is some relation to the inn-keeper there at the Catherine Wheel, whom he has accused for inviting him into the design of assassination. The Justice who examined the matter thought it an odd story, but however the man's fled, and he is a Papist.

I told my Lord Keeper what I heard from my Lord Marlborough and from my Lady Westmoreland. Since then my Lady Mary Fenwick has been endeavouring to send a message to my Lord Aylesbury, to invite him to join with Sir John in justifying his paper. It would be for both their safeties, the King being less concerned to take away their lives, than to be satisfied of the integrity of those he had made his bosom friends, but if my Lord Aylesbury refused it, Sir John must provide for his own safety, and would not be blameable if he offered to be an evidence against that lord. I hear this message was declared upon pretence of the difficulties in delivering it, but in reality the party neither approves of it, nor believes that lord would enter into any such measures.

I asked if the person might not be prevailed with to declare this, if there were occasion. I was answered, he would do it if my Lord Aylesbury

were brought to trial by this new evidence, his whole concern being for him.

I then pressed, that since he intended this service for my Lord Aylesbury, he should consider whether this was not the most proper time for it, while these practices were under an enquiry, and every thing would add weight, and my Lord might find a greater benefit by keeping his danger at a greater distance, than to have this only to make use of when it comes to be his immediate case. I am told I shall have a further account what they may be brought to to-morrow. I look upon it that these are arrows from the same quiver, and this restless man* will never learn till he has so entangled himself as to be made incapable of doing more mischief. I believe his Majesty will be moved that he come to the House of Lords and pass the bill as soon as they meet again. So that after that the applications about saving Sir John, may be only to himself, which I hope will put an end to all these perfidious indirect ways, and then the Lords may go on with the enquiry before them, nobody thinking it can or ought to be let drop. I don't hear the two cousins are like to come to terms of accommodation, but one will give the other as much of the burthen as they can.

I hear this Lord (Monmouth) was with the King on Thursday a very short time, but not at the council. He waves getting a proclamation to dis-

* Lord Monmouth.

cover the design upon him, but still talks of putting it into the Gazette, and that one of his men, who is in Newgate, had like to come out by a great bail that was offered for him; but he had spoke to my Lord Chief Justice and prevented it. What this rambling stuff is nobody can tell.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Jan. 7th, 1696-7.

Having sent your Grace an account last night by a messenger of what passed yesterday, I have little to say now, but I find my Lord Sunderland and Lord Portland could both have been content that the House had stopped at the first question, and not proceeded to the attainder. What other reasons they have for it, I know not, but they seem to apprehend lest this might bring his prevarications round again, and that when he is brought to the bar of the House, as he must be before the bill passes, that he will then bring vouchers for what he has said, and name some persons from whom he had those reports.

I told them what my thoughts were, that the justification would not have been so near complete if the House had not shewn their resentments against the author, as well as their disbelief of what he had writ; and they would not have it supposed there

were no persons really guilty whom Sir John Fenwick could accuse; and they did not intend such should presume upon their being altogether safe: but that Sir John Fenwick's being put into danger might, one time or another, make them known; and if Sir John Fenwick were kept as he ought to be, and his former instructors had not access to him, he would hardly meddle with that paper more, when he knew how it had been treated, but he would apply himself to speak of things and persons that were within his own knowledge.

This bill was espoused with great warmth by those upon whom the success of this session depends. I hope, therefore, they will be easily reconciled to it, and not seem to disapprove of their zeal.

My Lord Wharton thinks they were very right in this second vote; for my part, I care not whether it goes on or not. I should be content to see it prevented either by Goodman's coming in or his being taken, but I think the resolving it suited very well with the first question, and shewed it was more than a compliment. My Lord Wharton is out of order again, or else he would have writ to your Grace, being so ill on Thursday; he would hardly have thought it fit for him to be abroad yesterday had it not been for the service of his friends, and he attended to it with earnestness. What he complains of now is a cold. I find it is the opinion of several persons, as well as his, that it is of consequence your Grace should be here as soon as may be. I know

you will as soon as ever your health permits it, and therefore I say no more of it.

Mr. Harley dropped me the same excuse to-day that Mr. Boyle did yesterday, as if there had been no occasion for speaking in that debate. Mr. Boyle left the House before the question of attainder was put.

I went this morning to Kensington, and presented your Grace's letter to the King, lest the delay might be taken notice of. I shewed my papers at the same time of my Lord Bellew's case, but these he ordered to be kept for another time. I likewise gave him the letters from Brest and Dunkirk, which he took into his closet and said he would send them back. He asking what they contained, I said that from Brest spoke of Pointis's squadron as near ready to come out. And that from Dunkirk mentions the quartering of soldiers in four or five of the adjacent places, and that Boufflers had lately passed by. I added, what the rumour had been of a design upon Ireland, and whether his Majesty would think it fit that any notice should be taken of it to the justices there. That he said should be considered at the cabinet council to-morrow.

In the meantime, they might be told of it, as by way of news, and I wrote accordingly to my Lord Chancellor.

I have sent my Lord Newburgh word the letter is delivered, that my Lord Sunderland may now appear for them, if they can engage him. I send your

Grace the rest of your letters. The Admiralty have extracts constantly of what relates to the sea.

Your Grace will be informed by the inclosed what the House of Commons did this day.

The report was made yesterday in the Lords' House, about the Earl of Bath's privilege; the determination was that he be allowed six months to prosecute any of my Lord Montague's witnesses for perjury, and then his privilege is to be waved.

The Marquis of Normanby petitioned the House this day, complaining that the Duke of Devonshire had taken up his privilege contrary to agreement. He denied it, and next week it is to be considered.

The pirates were tried again yesterday and convicted both for the Danes' and Mogul's ships. Captain Vaughan was likewise convicted of high treason, and received sentence. Enclosed are two proclamations, one for apprehending Goodman, the other for discovering the libel against the government, which I don't hear they can yet trace out.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

9th of January, 1696-7.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 7th, and was very sorry to hear by the account sent yesterday to Sir Thomas Millington, that your Grace had an attack of your old distemper, which certainly comes very unseasonably.

The King unexpectedly sent back yesterday the commissions that lay so long at Kensington. Your Grace will therefore be pleased to counter sign them.

Mr. Methuen looks upon himself as secure of the Chancellorship of Ireland, my Lord Keeper concurring with those who promoted it before, but now I find he is aiming at another thing. I could wish people would be content with single gratifications, especially when they are in themselves extraordinary and beyond expectation; but I perceive that is not the way of the world, where men's hopes stretch with the filling.

What he now proposes is, to get his son to succeed him in Portugal. I did not understand any thing of it till yesterday; but I find he has had it sometime in his thoughts, and has already engaged my Lord Sunderland, Lord Romney, and Lord Portland. The two last come in upon the expectation that this is the most effectual way to secure the debt he has been soliciting in that Court; and he represents his son as the most capable and most acceptable minister that can be sent there: it seems he is a young man of twenty-five years of age, that speaks French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian exactly well, as he says, and is a favourite of the King of the Portuguese.

I don't think this design of his agrees with what your Grace intended for another, and therefore I think he has been too hasty in making his interest without consulting you in it. I did not take notice

to him that I thought your Grace was under any engagements; but I told him I was sorry to see his heart so set upon it, since if any disappointment should intervene, it would make me think him less satisfied with the dignity conferred upon him than I believed he would have been. But the case standing thus, your Grace will consider what you intend; if you have otherwise designed that envoyship, you will please to write to my Lord Keeper to stop it with the King. I know not whether you can depend upon any of the others for doing it, since they have this private interest among them to manage.

If you are indifferent, and disposed to gratify him in the manner he talked of it, it would be the more valuable obligation of the two, and in that case, he would write to beg your Grace's favour in it, which I believe his advisers put him upon procuring. If your Grace be engaged, and think fit I should tell him so, I would let him know it will not be proper for him to be soliciting to the contrary; but I am humbly of opinion that the King ought first to be moved by your Grace's letter to him, or by my Lord Keeper, and his thoughts to be known upon it.

We don't hear any thing yet of Sir Cloudesley Shovell's return; but the Admiralty have advices this day from Falmouth, that two Dutch men-of-war are come in thither from cruizing on the French coast, who report that on the 30th of last month, they saw fourteen French men-of-war come out of Brest, and they took three of them to be

three-deck ships, and the rest from seventy to eighty guns, with another vessel in their company, which they suppose to be a bomb-ship. They stood a course to the W.S.W. This is supposed to be Pointis's squadron; they have given advice thereof to Sir Cloudesley Shovell, who was then fourteen leagues from Ushant. If this be confirmed, I shall let Monsieur Jurieu know what your Grace remarks of the uncertainty of the advice which they pretend comes from the place.

My Lord Carlisle not coming to town yesterday, there was nothing done about the Earl of Monmouth's business. My Lord Carlisle was gone to some other place, and could not be found so soon, he returned not till three this afternoon. The Lords, therefore, yesterday read only the Bill of Elections, and have put it off for a week. They read likewise the Bill of Attainder, and ordered the witnesses to attend to day. Some moved that the prisoners should likewise attend to shew cause against their detention, but that was overruled.

After the Lords had passed the Bill of Attainder this day, they adjourned till five o'clock, in expectation of my Lord Carlisle, who came then, and they continued sitting till eleven this night. All persons were admitted to hear till my Lord Monmouth had done with defence, and then we were ordered to withdraw.

It took up a great deal of time in arguing what was said, and what was not said, by the ladies. The

Duke of Bolton, Lord Montague, and Lord Oxford's memories agreed better with my Lord Monmouth's sense of it, than either the Duke of Leeds, Lord Rochester, or Lord Nottingham's. After that, it was moved for the order of their proceedings, that the whole evidence should be read, which being done, my Lord Carlisle taking notice where he was concerned, gave the House an account of it. That he happened to be with my Lady Mary Fenwick when Mrs. Lawson came from the Duchess of Norfolk, and reported to her what she had heard Lord Monmouth say, which at Lady Mary's desire he took in writing as she dictated it.

When the evidence was over, Lord Marlborough and Lord Godolphin* spoke in behalf of themselves and your Grace, and my Lord Wharton for your Grace and Mr. Russell, without naming either the substance of what was said upon the unjust imputation they found in those papers, and without intermeddling with what censure the House would pass upon them. They hoped they should have an opportunity to make their innocence appear, and where as they found one Captain Smith mentioned in these papers, as a person who informed of correspondence held in France by some in great trusts in the government, and that he had original letters to produce; they moved he might be sent for imme-

* Lord Godolphin, as we have seen, voted against the Bill of Attainder throughout, although he was himself one of the persons most vehemently accused by Fenwick.

diately, and examined when the Lords thought fit, which was ordered accordingly.

Lord Monmouth was then put in mind it was his time to speak, if he would make any defence, and they left it till after he had done to consider whether he should withdraw or not, which he shewed a great desire to avoid.

He made a speech of above two hours long. I thought he would never have done; and, as if he designed to make them weary of hearing him again for a good while, he raked up all the critical observations that could be to make the papers contradictory. He denied he gave the Duchess any paper but the fourth, which she copied herself.* It was that he agreed with Sir John's counsel, his proper time to own his paper was before the Lords, and after he had assurances from them it should do him no prejudice, and that they would assist him in examining those who could make it out, and as to his being no evidence, he might stand upon that as he thought fit. I wonder to hear him own so much, but he looks upon this as the least criminal, and thought a seeming ingenuity here would have gained him belief in denying the rest. He would have it thought impossible that he could have used such expressions for the King: he who had ran such

* Whether such was this famous man's manner of speaking or not I know not, but whenever Vernon pretends to give an idea of one of Lord Monmouth's speeches, it appears rambling, ill-digested, and scarcely intelligible.

great hazards for this government and served it out of principle, and was 20,000*l.* the worse for doing so. He brought many arguments to prove the malice of the design against him, carried on by Papists who were provoked by his zeal. That it was a snare laid for him by a woman with whom he had family feuds; that her malice swallowed up all sense of gratitude in her, not only in regard to him, but to others, all who had served her in that House. That Mr. Smith was no acquaintance of his, but she had first made Smith known to him. He told a tedious story, how long he was made to believe that Sir John Fenwick had named him in his paper, and he had traced it since, and found, by one Robins, a lawyer, that it came originally from my Lady Mary, which he looked upon as a miraculous discovery made to a minister of state. That I take to be the secretary, but he did not name him. He made as if the discourses he had with the Duchess tended only to Sir John's making a confession of what he knew, which both Houses expected from him. He told the story how the King intended to put him at the head of the Admiralty in the spring. But he declined it for that time, because the measures had been concerted by others in the winter for that year's service, and whatever had been amiss in it would have been imputed to him. I did not observe he said anything reflecting on your Grace, neither did he say any thing to justify any body in his opinion, but was sensible of the evils of calumny,

and ended with professions that his respects to the King could never alter, and he relied on the Lords to do him justice.

There was a pretty long silence after he had done, which he observing offered to withdraw if they required it. The Duke of Leeds answered he need not do it yet, for he thought the Lords, considering it was late, would only at present deliver their opinion and judgment of the papers, without entering into the debate upon whom they were chargeable. As to those he said they were of a horrid nature; first, as they were highly injurious to the King, then as they reflected on persons in high trusts, who ought not to have imputations laid upon them in such a manner. He concluded his motion with what was afterwards the question. But my Lord Rochester then turning us all out, I know the conclusion only from my Lord Wharton, who called here to present his service to your Grace, and to let you know the vote passed is, that the papers are scandalous and villainous, and that the framing them was a contrivance highly criminal. The rest is put off till Monday.

Now they have made this step, I think they will not be long to seek for the author. My Lord Wharton tells me, likewise, that Smith can't be found, which he is sorry for, lest the next story be that he is concealed by the government. He lodges at Bradbury's, at the Cockpit, and has done this month; he lay there last night, and sent one this

afternoon to his lodging to enquire whether the Lords had sent for him. I am in no manner of apprehension if he does appear, for so much is expected from him, and he has so little to say, that I hope a day or two more will put an end to all this intrigue.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Jan. 12th, 1696-7.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 7th, and I hope the next will bring some better account of your health.

These two days have been taken up in the House of Lords in examining Smith. He was first asked what he knew of any correspondence with France carried on by persons employed by the government. He denied he knew any thing at all of it. He was asked particularly to my Lord Marlborough, Mr. Russell, Lord Godolphin, and your Grace, and made the same answer. He was asked whether he had any original letters of the above-mentioned persons. He said he had some writ by your Grace. Being asked of what import they were, he said they related to discoveries he had made to your Grace of the design against the King's person, and that he had not been recompensed for his services. And this led him into a large commendation of his own

merits. He told them, likewise, he had lodged the letters he had writ to your Grace and those he received from you, in Sir William Trumbull's hands, being sealed with his own seal, which he did for his own security the last summer, lest his lodging might be searched for them, and they taken away. Being asked from whom he had the intelligence he then gave, he answered from Hewet, Holmes's nephew, who was ordered to be sent for. He mixing me in his discourse, it was ordered the House of Commons should be moved for my attending them.

Robins the lawyer was examined in my Lord Monmouth's behalf, who said he had it from Simon Harcourt, clerk of the peace for Middlesex, that my Lady Mary Fenwick reported my Lord Monmouth's being mentioned in Sir John Fenwick's papers; and he being gone to Oxford, and not expected till to-night, the matter was put off till Wednesday, and a messenger was ordered to be despatched to him.

This morning I was before the Lords, and asked what I knew of Smith and the discoveries he had made to your Grace. I told them my story, that he had talked and writ of a great many particulars, but would never give your Grace any satisfaction by what means he had them, or how they were to be relied on, but seemed to make this a handle to press for larger sums, which your Grace was unwilling to give till you saw what use could be made of his discoveries, and what way he would put it into, that any of the persons might be seized, in which he

never offered to give any assistance, and therefore the matter rested there; but, however, your Grace had not omitted to give the King an account of what you had heard, but so as not to alarm him, since you saw no greater foundation for it.

This was afterwards confirmed by my Lord Wharton, saying he had the King's leave for it. Besides the Archbishop, Lord Godolphin, and Lord Privy Seal, told the House what they remembered the King said to the same purpose at the cabinet council, when he laid before them the discovery of the plot. I told the House that when the plot was made known, I found many things were true which this man said, and therefore was very pressing with him to know his author, and he named Hewet. He was seized and confronted, with other particulars which I need not repeat, your Grace knowing them already.

I said your Grace took offence at his arrogating to himself the merit of that discovery, when perhaps he might have contributed to it, but did not as he ordered it: that your Grace did not refuse the 50*l.* demanded for a horse; but if that were to let him into the mystery he might pretend he had one in readiness: and if his discovery were made out, he was promised that and a much greater reward; that his last letters were something more particular, but I believed your Grace was confined to your chamber when you received them.

I remembered, that in order to the recovery of

your health, you went out of town to Henley, and the King sent for you up to be at the cabinet of the 23rd of February. Whether your Grace had any opportunity then to mention Smith's last letters I know not, but I said nothing of it.

My Lord Macclesfield asking what information Smith had given about arms, I told him your Grace sent to search Sir William Perkins's house, according to Smith's directions, but the messenger found nothing in the place he told them of. They were, however, at the seizing of the arms which Sir Richard Newdigate had notice of, as they were brought back to a place they had been removed to some time before.

I said, though your Grace were dissatisfied with Smith, you intended to do something for him, till you heard he had threatened you with a complaint to the parliament, and then you did not think it safe or honourable for you to do it.

Whether this had any effect upon the House, I must leave to others to determine who sit in it. My Lord Haversham, who espouses my Lord Monmouth's interest, pressed that Smith's papers might be read which the Secretary had sent, which was done accordingly. His last letters seemed to make impression upon some.

My Lord Rochester, who has been friendly to you on this occasion, observed that two of the letters at the least, viz., those of the 14th and 19th, must have been letters contrived since the discovery of

the plot, and some thought if they were true, that he must have been as deep in as any body, or else he never could have been so exact; however, they appear so different from all his other letters to your Grace, and those he had writ to my Lord Portland, which were likewise produced, that it was thought worth while to send to your Grace, to know whether you have kept any of the letters that this man writ to you in February last, and, if so, that they may be laid before the House; "or if he had none of his letters, that he acquaint the House with what he can remember was contained in the letters writ to him by Smith about that time." Accordingly, I was called in and asked about the said letters, and telling the Lords that your Grace had the custody of your own letters, I was directed to send you a messenger with the above-mentioned message, and that he should be required to bring back an answer by Friday.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 15th, 1696-7.

The messenger returned yesterday in good time. I had your Grace's letters by nine in the morning, and immediately went to my Lord Keeper, and shewed it him before I sealed it. His directions were, that I should not bring it to the House till

they were engaged in Lord Monmouth's business, that being the day appointed for it: he would not have it directed, which some might seek occasion for.

This gave me an opportunity to shew the letter to Mr. Russell, Lord Wharton, and Lord Marlborough, who all approve very well of it, and being apprised of it beforehand, are the better prepared to speak in conformity thereto, as occasion shall serve.

The House of Lords began yesterday with reading the papers over again, together with all the depositions and examinations that had been taken in writing, which lasted near two hours. After that, Lord Monmouth spoke an hour, and while he was speaking, I gave your Grace's letter to one of the door-keepers, to deliver it to my Lord Keeper, and to let him know the messenger was returned.*

My Lord Monmouth, I hear, spoke much after the rate he did before, enlarging upon his own new topicks, why the witnesses were not to be believed, and making it impossible that he should speak disrespectfully of the King. Towards his conclusion, he offered of himself to withdraw, and insinuated, that if their Lordships thought any thing were to be

* This curious little peice of intrigue was put in practice in regard to a letter from Lord Shrewsbury to Somers, detailing, for the information of the House, the transactions which had lately taken place between him and Smith, in regard to the information given by the latter. That information, the Duke showed, was only sufficient to put the government upon their guard, but not directly to prevent the design, or convict the conspirators. The letter seems clear, manly, and straightforward.

imputed to him, he hoped he should understand the nature of his charge, and be admitted to answer it judicially. When he was withdrawn, my Lord Oxford was for an absolute acquittal, since the witnesses ought to be of no credit. My Lord Haversham, Duke of Bolton, and some others, allowed there was a good deal of indiscretion in his conduct in this matter, that deserved the censure of the House, but would have it proceed no further.

The Duke of Leeds, Lord Rochester, Lord Nottingham, Lord Marlborough, and Lord Godolphin, all pressed that they could not but look upon him as the contriver of those papers, and the judgment of the House ought to be formed accordingly. The Bishop of Salisbury said, there could be no excusing him from being the author of those papers, but he thought there might be some consideration, and likewise of some eminent services he had done for this government.

The resolution taken was :—"That it does appear to this House by the deposition taken, that Charles, Earl of Monmouth, had such a share and part in the contrivance of the papers delivered into this House by the Lady Mary Fenwick, that for that offence, and for the undutiful words sworn before this House, to be spoken by him of the King, it is ordered by the Lords, spiritual and temporal, that the said Charles, Earl of Monmouth, shall be, and is hereby committed to his Majesty's Tower

of London, there to remain during his Majesty's pleasure."*

It was a pretty full House of seventy or eighty. There were not above eight or ten who appeared any way favourable to Lord Monmouth. Those I have named are the Duke of Bolton, Earls of Oxford, Stamford, Sandwich, Macclesfield, and Warrington, and the Lords Haversham, Delawarr, and Abergavenny. Most of them had a meeting the night before, at the Duke of Bolton's, to consider how they might mitigate his censure, if they could not bring him off.

The Duke of Devonshire proposed the sending him to the Tower, but he would have assigned some indiscretion for the cause, which the Duke of Leeds and others did not think a reason for sending peers there.

The putting in the words "such share of the contrivance" was the softening of his friends, that it might look as if he was not the only guilty person. My Lord Haversham had formerly taxed my Lord Carlisle, as if he were involved in this matter. Some pressed to keep nearer to their former vote, declaring him guilty of misdemeanour, but were willing enough to wave it and leave his crime without a denomination, since it might as well rise higher as fall lower.

The Lords have besides appointed a committee to

* The words "and the pleasure of the house" were added.

draw up the reasons to be laid before the King of this proceeding against him, which are to be prepared against Monday, and I hear the Lords will attend the King with them in a body. It was proposed to add an address to remove him from the council, but it was thought that exposing their reasons would be sufficient.

I find by the latter part of the resolution confining him during the King's pleasure, and the pleasure of the House, it is understood that he cannot be released but by the concurrence of both, and if the House should rise and leave him in the Tower, he would not come out by a prorogation, but must be there till the Parliament meets again.

The Lords being tired with their long sitting so many days together, and it being necessary to allow time for drawing up their representation, they adjourned till Monday. But my Lord Keeper first acquainted them that he had an answer from your Grace to their message. It was then eight at night, and your Grace's friends were of opinion my Lord Monmouth's business should be quite off their hands before they went to any thing else, and this interval will give them more time to consider what they shall do with Smith.

I could not see my Lord Keeper, the Chancery sitting to-day; but I saw my Lord Sunderland, and made him your Grace's compliment. He looked upon the business as over, and I shall think so when they have declared your Grace's answer satisfactory.

My Lord Godolphin tells me I shall do well to attend on Monday, which I shall not fail in.

What time Lord Monmouth went to the Tower I know not, but suppose it was some time this afternoon.

I don't hear that any day is yet appointed for Sir John Fenwick's execution.

Saunders, whom I formerly mentioned, has discovered one Pearce, who was formerly a custom-house officer, to be the person who appeared in conveying away Goodman, and he is taken up for it.

We had a Dutch post yesterday. I sent the letters to Kensington, though they contain no great matter, as your Grace will see by the enclosed copies.

I likewise send a letter of Sir James Houblon* which your Grace will be pleased to tell me what shall be answered to it, that there may not be another charge hereafter for refusing to pay for foreign intelligence.

Your Grace will remember I offered him 100*l.* long since, and he not accepting it, I pressed him to made his demand, which he always declined. The matter, I believe, turns upon sixty or seventy more. In strictness, Mr. Russell should have taken this into his extraordinaries, and he might have afforded it: but it not being done brings it hither.

A general court of the Bank have met this day, and were acquainted with the amendments made by

* The family of Houblon was originally from the low countries, and having fled to England during the prosecutions of the Duke of Alva, became great merchants in this country.

the committee to their answer. The faction of the Houblons, who have always been averse to an engrafting, were very stiff and numerous; all they could be brought to was, that they submitted it to the Parliament, whether the proportion of Bank bills in a subscription of tallies should be one-third, one-fourth, or one-fifth, provided a million of Bank bills were brought in which they made their condition sine qua non. Since otherwise the end would not be answered of helping credit, and their constitution would be altered to no purpose.

I met with Sir Thomas Millington yesterday at my Lord Keeper's, who would not be sorry your cholic turned into the gout.

I had the honour of your Grace's letter by the post.*

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 23rd, 1696-7.

The King struck my Lord Monmouth's name out of the council book, on Thursday last.

Blancard, who I believe is sent to him (Lord Monmouth) from time to time to see in what temper he is, tells me he was disturbed at his being thus

* The business of Smith terminated on the 20th by two votes of the Lords, entirely acquitting the Duke of Shrewsbury, and declaring that Smith did not deserve any further reward. Lord Somers says that the general opinion was, "this Smith was resolved to be on either side, as the success was; he would be a discoverer if the assassination failed, and would have had a horse for the service if it succeeded.

dismissed, and did not expect it. He hoped he had satisfied the King that he was wronged in what was sworn of his disrespectful behaviour. He says likewise, he never had any difference with your Grace or Mr. Russell, and wonders any body should think he designed a mischief to either. He talks all manner of ways, according to the humour of those that come to him. But I hear no more of his project of impeachment; perhaps it was only to delay his being turned out.

The Marquis of Normanby delivered to the Lords a petition yesterday, in behalf of Sir John Fenwick, that he might, by the Lords' intercession, have a reprieve for a few days, in consideration that he had not had the assistance of a divine till the day before, at which time the late Bishop of Peterborough was admitted to see him. My Lord Wharton and some others opposed it. The Archbishop of Canterbury told them the like petition had been presented to the King the night before, and he refused it, saying "he neither could nor would do it." Upon that my Lord Nottingham replied, the King then had been misinformed as to his power, for he might not only reprieve him, but pardon him if he thought fit. The Archbishop brought it off with a distinction of what might be done by prerogative, and what in prudence was fit. The Bishop of Salisbury telling them of a letter taken up in the streets, which had dark expressions, as if the King would not live to see Fenwick executed. It had no other effect but that

the Lords, resolving on an address for a reprieve, put into it, if his Majesty thought it consistent with his safety, and the safety of his government. Some of the White Staves getting out of the way to avoid carrying it, it was put upon my Lord Scarborough, and the Bishop of London. My Lord Normanby and the Bishop of Salisbury were for giving one another that office. But the Bishop refused it in such a manner, that he was near being sent to the Tower, and was not freed but by asking their pardon for scrupling to obey any orders of the House. I hear the King's answer was, that he could not judge how consistent it was with the safety of the government to defer Sir John Fenwick's execution, but since they desired it, it should be put off till Thursday next, and a writ was issued accordingly.

Colonel Greenville had a petition of the same kind to be presented to the House of Commons. He was feeling people's pulse upon it, but found it would not have been received there. One objection would have been, that they were not for enlarging the prerogative to that degree.

Mr. Methuen was declared Chancellor of Ireland, at the council, on Thursday, and the warrant for his commission is despatching in the other office.

Sir John Talbot came to me last night, upon a very remarkable occasion, which he had in the morning communicated to my Lord Keeper. And it is thus—

One Talbot tells him he has had a pretty long

acquaintance with one Brown, whom he knew a student in the Temple, where his father made him reasonable allowance, till his estate came to be forfeited, and since that time he has lived by play, sharping, and a little on the highway. This man, with three or four more, set upon my Lord Monmouth last summer. The account he gives of it is, that they took from him his hat, sword, perriwig, a ring he had on his finger, and six shillings in money, which was all he had.

My Lord, making them a compliment, that by their behaviour they looked like gentlemen, and to take that course only out of necessity, and therefore desired to know how he might place ten guineas upon them. They immediately gave all his things again, except the six shillings which he would not take. The guard from Chelsea College coming to the hedge-side about that time, and firing upon them, they told my Lord they should be obliged to mischief him, if he did not call to the guard that there were none but friends, which he did, and bid his coach drive on.

Some time after this, Brown made my Lord a visit, and told him his errand. My Lord asked him, how he durst venture himself in coming thither. He returned my Lord his compliment, that he knew he was a man of honour, he came with assurance of what he had said to them, and those who were necessitated to lead his life ran great dangers elsewhere.

My Lord gave him a guinea or two, and en-

couraged his coming again, and after that he had frequent meetings with his Lordship, at some Mistresses lodgings. In that time, my Lord formed a project and proposed it to him, that he should come in when required, to declare that the design upon my Lord Monmouth was for carrying him over into France, upon pretence that he should be kept in exchange for my Lord Aylesbury, and that they were engaged in that design by I know not what Scotch Colonel, and Sir Peter Frazer, who, as I take it, is the Countess's own brother.

My Lord prepared large instructions to this purpose, which the man has by him, and indited letters that he copied, which were sent to my Lord Keeper, Mr. Secretary, and the Lord Chief Justice, upon which the advertisement signed by the Secretary, was published in the Gazettes, and John Davis, who is mentioned as the person who gave the first information, was in the robbery, and committed to Newgate for something else. He is likewise made privy to this design, whether before or since his commitment I know not. But both my Lord Monmouth and Brown have been with him in Newgate, and he stands yet prepared to swear whatever the Lord would have him ; but Brown pretends a detestation of so villainous a practice, and is endeavouring to bring it out, and make the naked truth appear, which he says he can demonstrate, otherwise than by his own oath.

Sir John Talbot adding that my Lord Keeper

was of opinion I should take this man's examination, and swear him to it; and that my Lord intended to send for me, and tell me so, which he had not done; I then acquainted Sir John Talbot that I thought myself a very improper person to take this examination. Not that I shall oppose my judgment to my Lord Keeper's; but as I was in your Grace's service, and considering what had passed between you and my Lord Monmouth, my meddling might be liable to very different constructions. Besides, who could tell what were Browne's true motives, and what he would abide by, so that the accusation might be turned upon me, and I made the calumniator, not without reflections upon your Grace.

Sir John was easily convinced I was in the right, and said he had the same thoughts presently after he had left the Lord Keeper. We then looked over the advertisement, and I thought some there mentioned, were the fittest for him to come to. I went this morning to my Lord Keeper, to know what he would do in it, and he writ to Mr. Russell to meet him at Westminster, at eleven o'clock, where I attended. It was resolved, that my Lord Keeper, by having received last night a letter from Brown, should examine him, with the assistance of Mr. Secretary, and my Lord Chief Justice, and he has appointed to do it to-morrow, at four in the afternoon, which I acquainted Sir John Talbot with, as I was directed, that he may send notice to the party.

The Lords have been this day upon the Bill of

Elections, which, after some hours' debate, they threw out by a majority of 25, there dividing 62 against 37. I send your Grace enclosed, Sir James Houblon's answer.

Sir Thomas Domville, clerk of the Crown in Ireland, has had a petition depending some time in the office, which came recommended from the Lords Justices of Ireland, for his being considered for services, during the Sessions of Parliament there. He has expected your Grace's coming up, and finding himself obliged to hasten his return, if he can't be despatched here, he would carry his papers to the other office. It is only a reference he wants at present to the Treasury, which, if your Grace don't think inconvenient to sign, I would send the papers, and believe they will be found unexceptionable.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 26th, 1696-7.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 23rd, and the great satisfaction of being told I have not done any thing over forwardly, which I am desirous to avoid.

The rest of the letters I sent away by a messenger, but that for my Lord Rochester, I delivered immediately myself. His Lordship being at home, I was glad to see a person of that consideration, so

well pleased with the opportunity he had of paying respect to your Grace, and that so much notice was taken of it. Mr. Compton was with me this morning, to whom I have given tallies for 3,000*l.* and taken his receipt for them. I have kept by me your Grace's bonds to Mr. Heathcote, &c.

Mr. Knight had not come to the House of Commons to-day, otherwise I had known of him when one might expect to receive your last quarter from the Custom House, but Mr. Chadwick gives me little hopes of present payment. He says the Commissioners are half a year in arrear of their own salaries; but he tells me they have a good sum lying at the Mint for coinage, and he hopes they may have it out within a fortnight: if so, I'll endeavour to get a share of it. In the meantime, I'll tell Monsieur Jurieu how necessary it is to have a little patience, which they may better afford, since their correspondence is not choicer. The late letters that De Breuil sends about the marine affairs, seem to be from a better hand than any of Monsieur Jurieu's correspondents.

I spoke this day with Mr. Lowndes, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Montague, but find no prospect of getting any money from them. Ready money is so scarce, that they know not yet where to get their own salaries for last quarter. They have had Mr. Neal with them yesterday, about the country Mints, and are giving the best orders they can in that matter. They have no provision yet to pay the recompence,

which is to be supplied by a bill now depending, and without it, I suppose people do not care to bring their money to the Mint, otherwise it will be received, and more effectual orders given for the speedy recoining it; but they foresee a very inconvenient delay, by the obligation laid for carrying all hammered money, paid upon taxes, to the next adjacent Mint to be received.

I endeavoured to find the Bishop of Salisbury today, but could not. I understand, by the late Secretary Johnston, that he don't so well approve of Mr. Secretary's conduct, as to concern himself farther in the matter. He* gives a very odd reason for his charging himself with Smith's papers, saying my Lord Monmouth would otherwise have carried them to my Lord Mayor. But I don't hear he gives any account, why, after he had them, he never thought fit to take any notice of it to your Grace, neither by word of mouth, while you were in town, nor since by letter.

There is little now said of Lord Monmouth. The project of impeaching himself, I suppose, is over; he can't now prevent his being turned out of his employments, which I imagine was aimed at. My Lord Portland went to him last night, to let him know the King would dispose of his place in the bed-chamber, which I am told my Lord Clifford stands fairest of.

I hear Brown has not yet appeared to make good

* Sir William Trumbull.

what he undertook. I have not seen my Lord Keeper, but Mr. Russell tells me, that my Lord Keeper, the Secretary, and Chief Justice, were expecting him on Sunday, at the time appointed, but he came not, though, I think, he writ to my Lord Keeper that he would. I know not whether he did not like some of the company; one of them at least would willingly have avoided him.

My Lord Keeper, I believe, may inform your Grace, more particularly of this matter, but I hear he, thinking there was a decency in giving Lord Monmouth notice of this man's coming in, received an answer, that shewed a good deal of confusion and mistrust of what he had to discover. Whether that, too, might not help to prevent it, I can't tell.

Since your Grace pleases to enquire my thoughts what may be the reasons for pressing your coming up at this instant, I'll lay them before you, though I am very unfit to judge of court intrigues, which I know so little of.

The King was always desirous to have you here, and certainly it was out of kindness, and from the great confidence he places in you. Your Grace will observe that, he has been very apt to believe you might have been here sooner if you would; and that persuasion lasting, he thought the examinations being over, one of the greatest obstructions was removed. But your Grace's friends have another notion of it, and believe your appearance very soon, would rather furnish matter of discourse. Mr.

Montague tells me, though he all along hitherto wished you here, as believing it would shorten the enquiry that was started; yet that, now he can be content that you should not hasten unseasonably, both for perfecting your cure, and that the true reason of your absence may be better understood.

I perceive the disposal of employments has not staid for your Grace, even where you might think yourself more immediately concerned, as in a Lord Justice, or Lord Chancellor of Ireland. But I fancy there is a scheme to be formed, into whose hands the management of affairs shall be committed; and it may be thought necessary to know your judgment of it, as well as the part you will take in it.

I know not whether my Lord Sunderland has ever proposed to your Grace, your being President of Council, but since he has come so low as to drop a word of it to me, I take it for granted he has said more of it to others. It looks to me, likewise, as if they thought you resolved upon quitting the Secretary's office, and that they would not longer oppose it, provided they had hold of you by the other tie; but if this be the case, I take the liberty to say, it appears to me a matter of great consideration.

I am sure I would not wish you chained to anything you think uneasiness; but, where one is at liberty to keep or leave, one would do it with a regard to ones own conveniency, and not another's gratification, who, I may say, don't deserve it, meaning him who is to be your successor, and might

applaud himself that his part succeeded, though his companion's miscarried. However troublesome this office may be, it can't be so till next winter, and the resolutions you shall then take may be entirely your own, without any compound of present circumstances, and whether you quit them or continue, you will do it with more satisfaction and advantage.

In the meantime, if it be determined to change the President, you may as well hold both places as one, and my Lord Sunderland may as well be a pattern for that as for your coming in second secretary, when you once had been first. If I am mistaken in my notion, your Grace will rectify it or pardon it, and when you come to town you will best determine what is to be concluded on. I am very much rejoiced that you find yourself so near a recovery. I hope the next thaw will make no alteration in it, and then you will see how fit you are for a journey.

We had two Dutch mails yesterday, an extract whereof is enclosed. I continue to send the originals to Kensington.

I send your Grace an approbation of some deputy lieutenants, which the Duke of Bedford desires your Grace will see, and the King's concurrence, by a letter from the new Earl of Albemarle's secretary. I have been employed to draw up the preamble of his patent of honour, which gave me occasion to desire his putting the King in mind of some papers lying before him.

Lady Mary Fenwick has brought another petition to the Lords to-day; this is for changing Sir John's sentence into a banishment, in consideration of his former endeavours to save the King's life. It was presented by my Lord Howard of Escrick;* a good many Lords were engaged to favour it, but it coming in after the hearing of a case, and the question being put for adjourning, that was carried by two voices, viz. 23 against 21.† Perhaps we may hear of her to-morrow at the House of Commons.

Paul Foley did very good service to-day in opposing the Tacking Clause, which they made sure to carry, having laboured at it ever since the Lords rejected the Bill of Elections, and mustered all their strength, among those who favoured the bill before. By their first cry I thought they had overwhelmed us, but Mr. Foley, under pretence of speaking to order, answered all their precedents, and declared the like never was in parliament. However, Lord Ashley, Lord Huntingtower, and his brother, Mr. Molesworth, and several others, were not to be reclaimed.

The Countess Dowager of Bristol died this morning. Captain Mees, who is appointed to command the squadron designed for the West Indies, is gone this day for Portsmouth, from whence Sir Cloudesley Shovell is expected up. I writ to Rear Admiral Benbow as your Grace directed, soon after their arrival.

* Thus written. † A curious way of dealing with a man's life.

The messengers, expecting some money will be ordered them very soon from the treasury, the clerk of the cheque will attend your Grace with their bills, having reviewed them, and mended what your Grace excepted against, and prepared to answer what further objections may remain.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 28, 1696-7.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 25th. I have let Sir James Houblon know your willingness to gratify him, to which the inclosed is an answer. I spoke yesterday with Mr. Knight, who was very civil, and shewed a good inclination to serve your Grace; but till their hammered money comes out of the Mint, he says he is under an incapacity of doing it. He thinks they may have the money in a fortnight or three weeks, and he will then be mindful of your Grace. Sir William Trumbull will not get his sooner, though he be very angry with them for the delay.

I have not seen or heard of the Pirates Bill since I delivered it to the King. My Lord Romney now intends to put him in mind of signing it.

I have sent the letter about the clippers to Dr. Newton, who will best know what to do with it, if

any use can be made of it, which I don't well perceive.

I take it to be writ by some conscientious Scotch pedlar, who is troubled with remorse for having furnished the clippers with broad money, and he would enjoin himself a penance of restoring a third part of what he so exchanged, which is all the advantage, or perhaps more than he got by it, and he thinks others are willing to do the like, which I am afraid he is mistaken in. But if they were so, it would go a good way in exchanging the clipt money in poor people's hands at the full value, which is what he proposes.

Sir John Talbot was with me last night, being newly come to town; he had not heard before that Brown failed the appointed time of his attendance. Sir John, finding the man had addressed himself immediately to my Lord Keeper, went out of town on Saturday, which otherwise he would not have done, but would have stayed to have given his advice to the messenger that passed between them. However, he will still endeavour to know from his friend, what has been the reason of this disappointment.

It would have been very fit to have had that matter in a reserve for any pranks this lord may be playing hereafter. I have by me the examination taken at Chelsea College, which does not agree with the account your Grace remembers from the relator's mouth, and therefore I believe he took so little notice of it, when I sent him a copy of it by the Lords Justices command.

I waited yesterday on the Bishop of Salisbury, and made him your Grace's compliment. I found him entirely disposed to prefer your Grace's service and interests before any body's else.

I hear the Earl of Bath has entered a caveat at the Great Seal against any grant of the title of Albemarle, upon pretence of its being promised him by King Charles, and the assurances he had from this King upon his delivering up the citadel of Plymouth, that all King Charles's promises should be made good to him.

My Lord Lonsdale was taken ill the other day with a fit of apoplexy. My Lord Craven, I hear, is very ill, if he be not dead.

A committee of the council met here last night, and the commissioners of the Admiralty attended. I suppose it was to consider with them what ships can be spared for the recovery of Newfoundland.

Captain Nees's* squadron may be sailing for the West Indies in eight or ten days, and they might go sooner, if the provisions were ready. We have a report in town that Pointis' squadron was put into the river of Lisbon, having met with ill weather, but I know not the certainty of it.

Sir John Fenwick† was beheaded this morning

* So written now; *M*ees previously.

† Sir John Fenwick, who was beheaded on Tower-hill on the twenty-eighth of January, 1697, behaved at the scaffold with much dignity and resolution. The whole case of Sir John Fenwick is one of the most painful and most monitory in the records of British criminal proceedings. Nobody who reads this correspondence can doubt that he was guilty of

upon Tower-hill. Sir Godfrey Copley, who was upon the scaffold with Colonel Greenville, tells me he appeared very composed, and shewed no concern at dying. He saluted the company at coming up, but did not speak to any, except the late Bishop of Peterborough, who was there with two other divines whom Sir Godfrey did not know. Sir John (was) despatched in less than half an hour. The bishop prayed with him out of a book where it was penned down. They prayed for the King without naming him. The rest was a form proper for the occasion. When he rose up he gave the sheriff a paper which was sealed up. He could not hear what he said to him in delivering it. Then he prepared himself for the block, and desired first to make trial how he should lay himself to it; after that he took his leave of the bishop, kneeled down and made a short prayer to himself, and, lying down, he told the executioner he was not to expect a signal; who, therefore, staying a little, struck off his head at one blow.

I am told the sheriff waited on the King with

participating in the plot for the King's assassination, but nobody can deny that he was condemned in direct opposition to the whole spirit of the English law. Nor can any body doubt that he was tried for one crime and executed for another, and that the horrible method of proceeding by attainder, which alone brought him within the grasp of the law, was resorted to solely in consequence of his accusation of Shrewsbury.

This letter by some accident has been misplaced in the manuscript, and also misdated. The date being as it is here printed, while that of the MS. is 1698.

Sir John's paper, while he was at dinner, but I can't hear what it contains, though 'tis said the King shewed it to some lord who was present.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Jan. 30, 1696-7.

My Lord Steward is laid up with the gout, but Sir James Forbes has been with him, and told him how much notice is taken of his being brought into this paper in that manner. He is very angry at it, and says if Sir John had said so much while living, he would have brought him to explain himself, and the matter would have appeared much otherwise than as it is now set down.

He does not remember the particulars of the discourse he had with him, but he might use expressions of some things he had said, that they were common and known already, which he did in order to draw from him a confession that might be well grounded and fit to be sent to the King. But he is sure nothing of that kind had any relation to your Grace or Mr. Russell; but on the contrary, he told him that what he laid to their charge was in itself so improbable, that it could gain no belief in the King, if he had not undeniable proofs of it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

4th of Feb. 1696-7.

My Lord Portland asked me, with great seriousness, whether I thought your Grace had any intention to act hereafter. I answered, that if you had your health, and the King thought it for his service, I believed it was not to be doubted but you would. He said the King could not give greater proofs than he had of his good will to retain you in his service. His Lordship added, provided you had no intentions of quitting, all would do very well. He knows your inclinations are to be at ease, and remembers you told him so some time since; but he hopes you will consider that this is a critical time for the friends to the government to be more firmly united in; that the dispositions were very favourable towards a peace; and if that were attained to, those who would prefer ease might do it then, with less hazards to themselves and the public.

Perhaps this may serve to explain what Mr. Felton told me yesterday he heard from my Lord Sunderland, that there was one thing in particular the King wanted to know from you, and intended, therefore, to write to you about it, if your coming up is like to be delayed.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

4th of Feb. 1696-7.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 1st instant. I would have waited on my Lord Romney to shew him that part which relates to the Pirate's Bill, but understanding he is in waiting, I shall send him the extract to Kensington. In the meantime I have acquainted my Lord Keeper with it, who perhaps may speak of it to him this evening at council.

I had another occasion of speaking to my Lord Keeper, Sir John Talbot having been with me yesterday, to let me know that the reason why Brown did not attend at the time appointed was, that he was apprehensive my Lord Chief Justice would have had him secured, and then he thought Lord Monmouth would have interest enough to hang him, and he expected some assurances should be given to the contrary. He further told me that Mrs. Mortimer had been lately with him from that lord, and advised him to go out of the kingdom, or otherwise he would prosecute him. Whereupon he offered to be gone, provided he would procure him a pass, which he undertook he should be furnished with within a few days, and he is to have it under the name of Ulysses Smith. He had another note likewise on Tuesday last, to tell him that lord would see him toward the end of this week.

I acquainted my Lord Keeper with these particulars, as also with Sir John's desires to know what further should be done, he thinking this an opportunity that was not totally to be neglected. My Lord Keeper's answer was, that the man had sent him notice of his apprehensions, which were ill grounded, since he was allowed to come to his lordship's house; but for giving any assurances, it was improper, since it could not be known what use he would make of it; and it was to be supposed that he came to deliver an information nobody knew of beforehand.

My lord was very cautious of giving any directions, or putting an opportunity into the man's hands to say he had any encouragement from him to make his discovery. But that if he did voluntarily offer himself, he could not refuse him a hearing, and he would appoint him another time, when the Secretary and Lord Chief Justice could be there. He thought the examination would be fairly taken, and that there would be no great partiality in the case.

I was with Sir John this morning, and told him the cautions I observed in my Lord Keeper as to his own particular, and the care your Grace had for him, that he should not be exposed to persons of that temper. He took both very right, and intended to send for his kinsman, (who, by the way, is his nephew) Gil. Talbot, being his elder brother's son, and chief of the Worvill family, in Shropshire. His acquaintance with Brown is from having served

together in Ireland. He will give him no other directions, but that he should of himself argue this man in a resolution of making the discovery he proposed, since otherwise it will look as if he made those overtures out of some other intention, that his fears were groundless of being siezed, after he had my Lord Keeper's leave to wait upon him, that he should desire another opportunity, and express he does it in confidence, that he is at liberty to retire, and expect what his Majesty's pleasure shall be, and likewise to take notice to him that since this lord mentions seeing him towards the end of the week, it seems as if he expected to come out by that time, and therefore if he were in earnest, he should make his discovery before, since greater difficulties might attend it afterwards. If this be complied with, I hope it may prove for the best, and I find Mr. Russell of that opinion, to whom I have communicated what has passed. But if there be any delay, I told Sir John my thoughts, that it would be best to let this matter drop.

I acquainted my Lord Keeper, at the same time, with what your Grace writes about an envoy for Florence, and have his leave to put him in mind of it again. If any such thing be in agitation, I know not whether there be any thing in it more than Mr. Blackwell's apprehensions upon observing how officious Dr. Aglionby is about my Lady Trumbull. I spoke of it before, at his desire, to my Lord Portland, who had not heard any thing of it, and I

am apt to believe Mr. Secretary will not be altogether as forward in these matters as he was some days ago.

I waited on my Lord Portland yesterday, to carry him my Lord Paget's letter, and he will acquaint the King in what manner he desires to be recalled. My Lord read to me a letter he received that day from my Lord Monmouth. It was that his Majesty might be moved whether he thought fit he should as yet petition for his liberty, and professes only to desire it, as it may be for his Majesty's service. He proposes that my Lord Archbishop, and Lord Keeper, might be concerned in moving the King. My Lord intended to acquaint them with it this day, and he supposes they will speak to the King this evening at council. I took notice that in his letter, he says he had read Fenwick's paper, and that now it appeared by whom the Duchess of Norfolk was instructed to give those advices denying that they came from him.

I saw the Archbishop accidentally yesterday, who told me the Prebend of Canterbury that has lain some time vacant, is now disposed of to Mr. Robinson, and the Speaker's chaplain has that of Westminster, so I have only to tell Dr. Blackborn (when I see him) of your Grace's good intentions towards him. The Archbishop took notice to me of that part of Fenwick's paper, that related to my Lord Steward's paper, as what was most necessary to be answered, but he did not think that part sufficiently

performed by what my Lord Steward had hitherto furnished them with.

I saw some sheets in his hand, which I take to be of the Bishop of Salisbury's writing. They say my Lord Steward will be at council to-night, and that he will so explain himself there, as to be better understood.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 9th, 1696-7.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 6th, and have seen Sir John Talbot this morning. He spoke to his kinsman before he went out of town in the manner I have already mentioned; he has not seen him since, but when he does he will speak to him to put into writing all he has heard from Brown of this matter.

He has lately had given him by another hand, a copy of a letter that this man writ to Lord Monmouth; as it appears, before the advertisement came out in the Gazette, which he has been obliged to shew to some Irish friends of quality, to clear himself to them of the suspicions they had of him, that he was turning informer: it shewing the nature of the thing he was to be engaged in, and what reluctancy he had to such an undertaking. I send your Grace the copy of it. The Scotch colonel who is mentioned is not yet known, but supposed to

be in the robbery. The man is now moving to get a pass to go beyond sea, by means of the Duke of Ormond. It were much to be wished he would lodge his secret in some unquestionable hands before he went, and then perhaps his absence might be most preferable, if the King would have this matter lie dormant. But whether he will take this method or not, is uncertain.

I have shewn Mr. Griffith's letter to Mr. Montague, and read to him what your Grace writes in his favour. He is of opinion he had better stay to be employed, if the duty be laid upon malt, where he may find something more advantageous than he can have under the capitation bill. All that I think they propose to give any of those commissioners is 100*l.* per annum. He has promised to take care of him, and allows me to put him in mind of it, which I have acquainted Mr. Griffith with, and he seems well satisfied.

As to my Lord Steward, all I hear of him is, that he stamps and frets at his being brought into Fenwick's paper; but I don't perceive he will take the methods that have been proposed to him for vindicating himself or others. It was expected he would have come to council on Thursday, and so explained himself that notice might be taken of it in the Gazette.

Sir James Forbes understands from him, that he has been with the King, and that his Majesty is of opinion that there will be no need of publishing

any thing as from him, that is, I suppose, according to the manner he has expressed himself in. Others say my Lady Mary Fenwick keeps him in awe, and that she threatens she will print the letters he sent her from the Bath, if he attempts confuting her husband. So that matter must rest upon what he will suffer to come out in the answer prepared to Fenwick's paper. The part he is concerned in will be sent him for his perusal, though they have already taken it from his mouth. I can't yet get a memorial of King James to send your Grace, though I was promised one. I hear the Bishop of Salisbury is answering it.

Mr. Methuen tells me my Lord Portland had not yet spoke with the King, but promised to do it this evening.

Since I began this letter, my Lord Lucas came to the office, and tells me that calling at the other office,* he found there one Brown, an Irishman, who had been seized there the night before by a messenger, by Mr. Secretary's warrant, and was brought thither to be examined by Harry Baker. I find, by the character Lord Lucas gives him, who it seems knew him in Ireland, this is the man Sir John Talbot has been speaking of, and my Lord has it by the end, that he was one concerned in robbing the Earl of Monmouth. He says he spoke to him, and advised him to be ingenuous in the discoveries he should make, which he was very capable of; and

* Sir William Trumbull's.

that Brown said he desired nothing more, provided he may be well dealt with. But he seemed apprehensive of parties there were among us.

I gave his Lordship a hearing, as one wholly ignorant of the man; but I am not a little surprised how this comes about, or what this man has to say next. If he will tell his story as he has pretended, he is in very ill hands for it, and if he would turn his accusation, I don't know that he has any great handle for it.

I have acquainted Mr. Russell with this passage and according to his advice, I have writ it to my Lord Keeper, who if he pleases may be best informed both how this man comes to be taken up, and what he says. I don't think it proper for me to shew any inquisitiveness about him.

The two Spanish packet-boats are arrived together, and yesterday we had four mails by them. I had letters from Mr. Stanhope of the 2nd, 9th, 16th, and 30th of December, which, giving an account of an express sent to Madrid, for the Almirante of Castille; and believing his Majesty more particularly curious of what comes from thence, I sent the letters to Kensington; and there was no need of copying any of them, since what they contained in substance, was no more than that the King seemed to be recovered by the means of quinquina, which he has taken great quantities of. That he had been twice abroad in his coach, and the Queen with him, going in devotion to Notre Dame de Atocha, which is a

mile without the town. That they talk of having twenty thousand men in Catalonia this spring, whereof five thousand should be horse, and that eighteen thousand were said to be provided. That the Almirante acted as chief minister, who is the Queen's great confident; that it had been whispered about, as part of the French King's offers, provided one of his grandchildren might succeed to the crown, he would undertake to annex Portugal to Spain, and relinquish all pretensions for the future.

Mr. Methuen thinks the Portuguese may have some such jealousy, and that makes them the more vigorous in opposing the French interest. They will have very soon ten thousand foot, and two thousand horse in a readiness; and Mr. Methuen believes they will march this spring to the assistance of the Spaniards in Catalonia, finding a design formed to make impressions beyond that province.

The merchants who have the freshest letters from Madrid, viz.—the 1st of January, say that Neville was sailed, and that the Turkey fleet was arrived there.

We had a Dutch post this morning, but no letters from Monsieur Jurieu's correspondents; there was only a letter from Monsieur de Breuil, which is gone to Kensington. The copy of it is enclosed. Mr. Bauwen, of Ostend, brought me a letter this morning, which he says is come by an advice boat. The news being considerable, if true,* I have sent

* That Jean Barth had sailed in pursuit of the Ostend fleet.

extracts both to Kensington and the Admiralty, and send your Grace the originals, there being mention of wines, which he supposes may accommodate you.

The state of the Irish garrisons sent by Brigadier Wolseley, I'll put into my Lord Galway's hand, whom I look on as the most proper person to shew it to the King.

Mr. Felton is laid up again with a fit of the gout. His brother is now at death's door, if he be not now dead.

Lord Monmouth, I hear, will forbear moving for his liberty till next week. In the meantime, he is pretty much visited by My Lord Sunderland, and Blancard goes sometimes to him. So that some people intend to keep fair weather with him.

They say Sir Stephen Fox has accepted of being Queen Dowager's receiver. I suppose it is only to dispose of it again, where he thinks best.

The Earl of Bath has been heard upon his caveat, against the grant of the title of Albemarle.* My Lord Keeper will make his report to the King, and then I believe the patent will pass.

The Lords did not sit to-day, and yesterday they heard a cause only. To-morrow they have appointed to read the Bill against East India silks.

I hear the report contradicted about my Lord Chamberlain's quitting.

* To Arnold Jouse Van Keppel, a great favourite of William III., to whom the title was assigned, notwithstanding this caveat.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 16, 1696-7.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 13th, and rejoice that this thaw has been less felt by you than the former. I acquainted my Lord Portland with the good news, who hopes that nothing more will obstruct your coming up, which he thinks of consequence both to yourself and the publick; and I understand by Mr. Russell that my Lord Sunderland is of the same opinion. I believe your Grace may see my Lord Wharton within a few days; he goes, I hear, into Buckinghamshire on Thursday, and from thence he will make you a visit. He will inform your Grace of several particulars that are above my knowledge, a meeting being intended before he goes, at which I suppose both the present and future state of our affairs will be considered.

I don't hear that Brown has yet been examined, which I can't but think strange. Mr. Russell does what he can to press it. Not meeting with my Lord Keeper he writ to him last night to let him know of what consequence he thought it that this matter should not lie as it did. I have no manner of imagination that it sticks with his lordship, but I suppose all the three are not in the like forwardness to meet. I was told yesterday that Mr. Secretary sent my Lord Keeper word he should not be at

leisure to meet him that day nor this. I make no enquiry after Brown, but Sir John Talbot (whom I saw this morning) tells me he hears he is close confined, but he has met with one who knows something of his secret, and he believes if there be not foul management, the man will not vary from the truth; and he thinks he has found a way to intimate to him, that it will best become him to stick to it, and to know from him how he came to be taken up, which is as yet very mysterious.

Among other reports we have had of great officers to be removed, but without any foundation that I know of, it begins to spread as if the Secretary were one of them,* and it is taken notice of even by some in his office. If it comes to him, as I can't doubt it, I do not believe it will dispose him to be very fair and impartial in the matter depending, if there has not been an original prevarication.

I have acquainted my Lord Galway that your Grace has signed his bill; he will take an opportunity to return your Grace his thanks, and will let the bill lie till he has spoke to the King. I gave him Brigadier Wolseley's state of the garrisons, which he will shew to the King.

I have writ to Mr. Curtis pursuant to your Grace's directions, and left the letter with your porter.

I am to seek to know what to do with Broughton's letter. I take it for granted the King would do

* Sir William Trumbull.

nothing upon it till your coming up, and I hope it will not stay long for that.

We had a Dutch mail on Sunday, and another yesterday. I send your Grace the extracts, the King having the originals. Monsieur Jurieu sends a justification of his advices, and still insists that three decked ships are gone with Pointis. This advice was contradicted by De Breuil's memoire particulaire, which he says likewise is to be depended on: one knows not what to do between such different opinions.

There are letters from Cadiz overland of the 21st of January, which say Neville sailed the 19th, and the Turkey convoy arrived there the same day, and would be obliged to stay a month at that place for a supply of provisions, most of what was ready, being gone with Admiral Neville. It is to be wished for him that he keep out of Pointis's way, who is standing the same course, and was in the latitude of Cape Finis Terræ on the 14th, five days before Neville sailed.

Captain Meese is not yet gone.

I have not seen Mr. Knight these two days, to know when the money will be ready, but I write to Monsieur Jurieu and De Breuil to give them hopes it is coming; and I desire the latter will inform me how far his "*lettre particulaire*" about sea affairs may be depended on, from whence we had the last different advice about Pointis's squadron.

The Earl of Albemarle had his patent passed

under the great seal this day. He has stayed all this while only for the embellishing the skins. He don't think of being introduced till the business be over of the East India silks.

The Lords have been upon that bill to-day, and heard the company and weavers pleading their own cause, but they have adjourned the debate till Thursday next.

I believe my Lord Wharton will hardly go out of town till that be over.

A common council meets to-night at the council chambers about Hudson's Bay.

I am told the King intends to give my Lord Strafford's Garter to my Lord Portland, and that it will be declared some time this week.

My Lord Privy Seal, I hear, has solicited for it, and may be might expect it before, or soon after his embassy. But it is supposed this is conferred upon my Lord Portland at this time of the Earl of Albemarle's promotion, to shew he is still preferred a step above him.*

* William Bentinck, Earl of Portland, the most distinguished of William the Third's favourites, entertained a great jealousy of Keppel, and ultimately resigned his offices in disgust at seeing the progress of the latter in the King's esteem.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 18, 1696-7.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 15th, and since you do not find you go backward in your cure, I hope this gentle weather will contribute to perfect it, and when you are in a condition for a journey, I believe it is the opinion as well as desire of your friends that you undertake it, which I suppose you will be more fully informed in by my Lord Wharton, who, I hear, goes for Woborne to-morrow or next day, and Mr. Chadwick with him. They both intend your Grace a visit. Mr. Rowley goes to-morrow, who will carry with him the two books.

I have not seen Mr. Prior since, so I have had no more discourse with him about young Mr. Rowley. Your Grace may well be surprised that you have heard nothing of Brown's examination. The putting it off before he was in custody I thought was not very advisable, but now he is taken, and that letters of my Lord Keeper and his servants are found with him, I know not what the meaning should be of letting the matter lie thus neglected, unless it be in tenderness to Lord Monmouth, and by his privity. If that be the case, I shall be sorry there is more regard had to his honour than to innocent men's preservation.

I spoke to Mr. Russell to-day, who does not understand the meaning of it, but intends to speak to my Lord Keeper this evening at council.

Mr. Methuen's credentials and instructions are in hand. The father does not think they require any great haste. I believe both he and my Lord Galway will stay here all the next month, and perhaps before they go the Commission of Justices may be altered; by a word that dropped from my Lord Galway the other day, I find there will be a new set.

He was asking me if I knew any person that might be fit to be secretary to such a commission, since the person who was in possession was not looked upon to be of weight enough for that commission. I have delivered his bill of extraordinaries to his agent; he informed me my Lord had spoke to the King, and that his Majesty approved very well of the doing of it. I suppose his Lordship writing to your Grace gives you the same account.

I have made some enquiry for my Lady Lovelace, but can't yet hear of her.

Mr. Kien sends me just now his Majesty's letter for your Grace, with directions to forward it with all possible diligence, and therefore I am obliged to send a messenger on purpose, and while he is getting himself ready, I shall add, that the Earl of Albemarle was introduced into the House of Lords this morning, but did not stay out the debate, which was, whether the bill against East India silks should be committed, which was carried in the affirmative by 45 voices against 34. My Lord Portland and Lord Rivers went out and did not vote.

A Chapter of the Knights of the Garter is sum-

moned to meet to-morrow at Kensington, to invest my Lord Portland with the order.

Mr. Secretary and Sir Joseph Williamson* went yesterday to compliment my Lord Privy Seal† upon his having the Garter. I could hardly believe a secretary should be so ill-informed, and run away with a wrong notion, but that Monsieur Blancard was told it by Sir Joseph Williamson himself, who was very much surprised to hear they were under a mistake, and my Lord Pembroke did not undeceive them, but received their compliment with bows, neither owning nor disowning the thing.

We had an account yesterday that an Ostend convoy coming from Ireland was met on the Flemish coast by De Bart, who took them all but one ship which escaped hither.

To-day I have an advice from Mr. Macky, which is enclosed, that I might have prevented this loss, if I had done my duty, but I am not much afraid of this complaint, let them bring it when they will, for the day Bauwen brought his letter to the office I had two extracts made of it, and one was immediately sent to Kensington, the other to the Admiralty. And this I did because of the consequence of it, though Mr. Bridgman had been with me before Bauwen came to the office, and told me he had seen his letter overnight; if there be a neglect, therefore, it does not lie here.

* One of the plenipotentiaries for the peace of Ryswick.

† The head of that mission.

I spoke with Mr. Knight to-day in the House, who promises to pay the money so as I may make the remittances by Tuesday's post, when I will send Monsieur Jurieu 4000 gelders, and 400 to De Breuil.

The King was very much set upon having the compulsory clause for bringing in plate, but as it has miscarried, there may be a good deal still brought in, if they go on as they intend, to secure that ready money be paid in exchange for plate, and that no deduction be made for soder.

I send the books by the messenger, since your Grace will receive them a day the sooner.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

February 20th, 1696-7.

I acquainted your Grace in my last with the complaint that was threatened on account of Mr. Macloud's letter from Ostend, which was brought into the House of Commons yesterday by Sir Thomas Dyke. But I found Mr. Bridgeman the only person named in it. The examination desired has taken up this day, which I give a particular account of by itself. I shall only add here, that the hearing was advantageous to the office, and all were satisfied we had done our parts, and within due time.

I am only sorry that the matter was pushed so far

upon the Admiralty, when such fair reasons were offered for dropping the complaint; but the whole party seemed set upon it, and they took it up from one to another till they had hit upon a nail they could drive; for an angry question would not have been carried, but such as carried with it an instruction how the Admiralty should behave themselves for the future, drew people into an acquiescence, and made them less sensible of the bitterness of the pill.

Mr. Harley started it after the matter had been long canvassed. It was spoke against, but the question determined it. I am very apprehensive that this will go a great way towards the disgusting Mr. Russell, who has not forgot the trouble given him at the beginning of the session, and the sore has been fretted by Sir Rowland Gwyan's committee, since which it is still running on upon a vexatious enquiry, and though he is not touched in it, yet I can't but believe it nettles him, that he is not a greater safeguard to his friends; and the aiming, as they now do, to throw dirt upon pressed men, he may think a wound to himself through another's side.

James Bull, one of the petitioners, gave to-day a very blunt reason why he did not apply to the Admiralty for the safety of these ships, saying he could not see of what use it would have been after the discouragements he found Mr. Chants daily met with from that board, and the little effect himself had experienced of his former solicitations.

It was aggravated against the board that they should do nothing upon such an advice, when Mr. Bridgeman, as soon as he read it, thought it so material as to advise the communicating it to the government, in answer to which, Sir Robert Rich gave Mr. Bridgeman a rub that perhaps he might deserve. He said Mr. Bridgeman told them, that if they thought their advice so very material they should communicate it, but if he had thought so himself, it was his duty to have taken a copy of it, rather than to have expected it from the Secretary's office.

When the House were in a committee upon the Civil List there were some reflecting touches. Mr. Smith happened to express the necessity of the family in an ill-chosen word, though with a good meaning, saying that the King was in a starving condition. Mr. Greenville took a fancy to repeat the word very often; and if the King were starving, why then were such grants made of crown lands, and why such grants and great pensions, and why foreigners enriched and made lords.

Sir William Cooper answered him—by that gentleman's talking of pensions he seemed to know they were paid, but he hoped they were not, for he did not desire they should.

Mr. Montague nipped him yet closer, saying, he found some gentlemen could not bear that this Prince should recompense any of his servants. If they would enquire into former as well as present

gratifications, they might make something of it, and he could tell them of a family that had cost the crown, in King Charles's time, 300,000*l.*

It was believed that some gentlemen would have taken this opportunity to make their court, and wiped off the remembrance of abundance of oppositions by a forwardness in so critical a point, but they have not yet shewed any such intention.

We had a Dutch post yesterday. I send your Grace the extracts of the letters: the King and Admiralty have theirs.

A Chapter of the Garter was held last night at Kensington; my Lord Portland was elected and invested with the order. There were ten of the knights present, all that were in town except the Marquis of Normanby and Lord Feversham.

My Lady Lovelace has your Grace's letter. I heard last night that there had been a meeting at my Lord Keeper's, and Brown was before them for an hour and a half, and that my Lord Chief Justice Holt's clerk went with him afterwards to finish his examination. I endeavoured, therefore, to see my Lord Keeper to-day before the House sat, but his Lordship coming late was stopped there and came not to his rooms, and this evening he was from home. But I find he writes to your Grace himself, and you will no doubt have the fullest account from him.

The Lords did not sit yesterday, and to-day they were in a committee upon the bill against East

India silks; those who are against the bill prevailed, for an amendment to prohibit all wrought silks of what country soever, which, after a long debate, was carried by six voices. If this should stand it would secure the ——* to Italy, but they say that will be excepted, if the Commons insist upon it. My Lord Wharton don't think of going out of town sooner than Monday. He does not know but when the messenger returns he may hear your Grace has thoughts of coming up.

Your Grace will please to sign the enclosed certificate of the time my Lord Galway's envoyship determines, which is necessary for his accounting with the Treasury.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 7th, 1697.

I hope your Grace has performed your long journey without any great inconvenience: it was a very ill-chosen day if one could have foreseen it, and I think the King would not have gone to Windsor just now, but that he had appointed to meet you there.

I hope the trouble will be recompensed by the satisfaction you shall meet with, and the good you will be able to do, by putting things in a steady posture that may have a prospect of lasting; what that

* A word wanting.

is I am not able to say, but when your Grace knows the King's mind, and shall have discoursed with your friends, you will make a right judgment of what can be done, and go further in effecting it than any one else must pretend to.

I have not heard from my Lord Sunderland a long time. He found proposals did not thrive in my hands, or that they were not approved of elsewhere. If he has waited for your Grace's arrival, it was certainly the wisest course, and if all mankind knew but the advantages of a reconcileable temper, and how much it contributed to their own ease to make others so, I think animosities would soon be at end. I like the King of France, his way, that is willing to make peace when he seems least to stand in need of it. Those are sure to maintain it who shew they are willing to live in quiet while they have a force to do otherwise.

There is one thing my Lord Sunderland has writ to me about which I have moved the King in, but I don't yet know his final pleasure in it. That is about the allowance for my Lady Clancarty. The King intends to make a provision for her, which must serve for the maintenance of both till he commits some new offence; but something must be ordered them at present, or I don't see how they can quit the kingdom. The condition of his pardon is that he depart the realm within so many days after his pardon has passed the seal: the blank for the time is not yet filled up in the warrant, or the war-

rant delivered out, for want of knowing when they can be able to go.

My Lord Romney, I believe, would have known the King's mind, but my Lord Leicester's illness (who is now dead) kept him from stirring abroad. If your Grace would please to get this matter settled it would be an obligation to the family. What I think is aimed at is, that my Lady Clancarty should have 1,000*l.* a year allowed her till she comes to be entitled to the half of my Lady Bristol's pension, and that will not be till her father's death, who, I perceive, would have this managed with privacy, and that will not be altered by the communicating it to your Grace for your help and furtherance.

I send your Grace a copy of our Parliament news, which is the same I send to the King. I likewise enclose the French letters that came this morning, which the King has not yet seen.

I put into Mr. Yard's hands Mr. Prior's letter, with the accounts of the entry and audience.*

His Majesty will inform you of the proposals of peace that are sent from Turkey. I am getting them copied and translated from the Latin, which shall be sent to your Grace to-morrow, with a draught of the letter to the Emperor.

I shall send it in English, that you may make such alterations in it as you think fit, and then it may be put into Latin for the King's signing, and dispatched out of hand.

* Of the plenipotentiaries on the peace of Ryswick.

In the meantime, I shall send Sir Joseph Williamson, as his Majesty commanded, a copy of the Vizier's letter and proposals, with an extract of my Lord Paget's letter, which helps to explain them, that the whole may be communicated to the Pensioner, and their ambassador at the Porte be instructed to join with my Lord Paget in carrying on the mediation.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 14th, 1697.*

I had the honour to write to your Grace this morning, and have since been at Kensington and given the King an account how much you were indisposed, which he expressed a very real concern for, both on your Grace's account, and as he thinks it will disconcert the measures he had resolved on.

It seems he has already been told that some talk as if your Grace's not coming to town proceeded rather from the dissatisfaction you had met with at Windsor, than the violence of the distemper; and though he knows the contrary, he apprehends it will be a great prejudice to his service if this persuasion should get footing, and make some people cooler in the business that is coming on.†

* From time to time I find one of Vernon's letters to the Duke wanting.

† This part of Vernon's correspondence is very valuable, as it affords

It is certain this is a very critical time, the supplies being now to be entered upon, and the well-settling the Civil List will much depend upon what humour our managers shall be in.

The King commanded me to acquaint your Grace that he intended to go to Windsor on Friday next, and he hoped he should find you still at Woburne, and you would either attend him, if you were well enough, or he would come over to you. In that case, if your Grace would have Mr. Yard wait on you there, you will send directions for it, or otherwise I will send Mr. Ellis, since the King expects to have a clerk in waiting. For my part, I am wholly ignorant of the future scheme, and have no curiosity to know it before it be made public. And the King thinks that what passed between him and your Grace is a secret to all the world besides; but in the manner they begin to talk of late of my Lord Wharton's having the seals, it looks as if it came from good hands. They have likewise disposed of the Comptroller's staff to Sir Thomas Felton, and

light to transactions which would otherwise be in darkness, from a blank of nearly two months in the other branches of Lord Shrewsbury's correspondence. The Duke joined the King at Windsor, and remained with him and Lord Sunderland several days. Many matters of the utmost importance were to be settled: a First Lord of the Treasury was to be appointed, a Lord Lieutenant or a Commission for Ireland was to be decided on, and five or six offices of an inferior rank were to be filled up. It is certain that on this occasion Shrewsbury did not receive that support from Lord Sunderland, or that compliance from the King which he expected. Whether the suspicion hinted at in this letter was justified or not, the Duke retired to Woburn instead of coming to London, and remained obstinately there for some time.

Colonel Godfrey thinks it almost time that he should be putting in for Master of the Household, in consideration whereof he is willing to abate so much of his pension.

As to my Lord Sunderland, I hear no mention made of him, nor do I hear of any body he writes to concerning his affairs.*

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

March 14th, 1696.

I could not receive the honour of you Grace's letter of yesterday but with great trouble and thoughtfulness. When I see you despair of, or resolved against meddling with any employment, I must reflect at the same time how much public interest will suffer by it, and in my own particular, that I lose all the protection, support, and comfort, that I ever proposed to myself, and shall return again to my wishes of being fairly dismissed without knowing which way to get at it.

I am seriously solicitous for your Grace's health

* I have many doubts of the accuracy of the date of this letter, and am inclined, from the expressions concerning the Civil List, &c., to believe that it belongs to the following year. In this opinion I am the more induced to rely, as I find in this very place no less than four letters, the misdating of which, and the misarrangement of them in the Shrewsbury Papers, is proved by the events they refer to, such as the trial of Duncombe, &c. The letter that follows I doubt also; but the one dated April 29, 1697, is evidently accurate from the reference to Brown's release.

in the first place, and if that cannot be established, we must all submit to resign and be resigned.

The King was speaking yesterday at his levee as if he expected you would be in town to-day, but what hopes is there of it? I should have gone this morning to Kensington to give him an account of this letter were it not for Arnold's committee, which I will first attend.

(The rest about the examination of the two spies, Chaloner and Price.*)

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

April 29, 1697.†

I waited on my Lord Chancellor this afternoon, and delivered my message both from the King and my Lord Portland. He does not think the excep-

* A large portion of this letter is wanting in the copy before me.

† One letter is probably here wanting. In the interim between this and the preceding one, the Duke of Shrewsbury had come to town and pressed the King once more to suffer him to resign, by a letter dated 19th April. The King, however, did not yield, and there is every reason to believe that, judging Shrewsbury's wish to arise as much from disappointment as ill health, he made such concessions in regard to his ministerial arrangements as induced the Duke to remain in office. The Lord Keeper Somers was appointed Chancellor; Montague First Lord of the Treasury, with the Chancellorship of the Exchequer; Lord Wharton Chief Justice in Eyre, on this side Trent, Lords Galway, Winchester, and Villiers were sent in commission to Ireland; Russell was created Earl of Orford, and Sunderland became Lord Chamberlain. These arrangements were barely complete when William sailed for Holland on the 25th April.

tions taken to this grant very well grounded; but that the pretensions my Lord Portland has to reprisals upon him, are equal to all who have prior grants of fee-farm rents, they having all the same clauses. But, however, he is not so fond of his grant, as to have any contest about it, and therefore will desist from proceeding any further in it, without expecting or concerning himself to get an equivalent. Since he receives it in this manner, I am glad he intends to write himself to the King and my Lord Portland. I hope he will soften his answer to them; but if his resolution holds out, one may conclude it will lay a heavier load on all our late grants, and go a great way towards sinking them.

I told him, likewise, what Mr. Pulteney desired he should know as to the Ryegate grant. He said that was already passed the seals, and it was not in his power to stop it; but if that were superseded too by Act of Parliament, he was very well contented.

His Lordship beginning the discourse about Brown, I told him what your Grace had ordered as to supplying him when he came out. I find my Lord most inclined to have him released upon bail, and that will be least liable to exception, and thinks it as well done by the Secretary's taking his bond with sureties or his recognizance, as by a judge. I think, therefore, to acquaint my Lady Westmoreland with it, that he may be advised to propose it to the Secretary.

The hint my Lord Marlborough gave him, he takes very well, and will observe it.

My Lord Chancellor has seen the additional instructions for Ireland, and made some little amendments in them.

The Marquis of *Winchester*, having received your Grace's letter, came to the office this morning, and says he will be going on Tuesday fortnight.

I called at my Lord Chamberlain's this morning, and the Earl of Stamford came in; he was told what the King directed about the Lieutenancy of Plymouth. He said if the King would have it, he must submit; but renewing the commissions would be disgustful to those who must take out new deputations. The first time the Council meets, he intends to speak to Mr. Attorney about the way this is to be done. I have seen Mr. Attorney since, who thinks the Earl's commission ought to be renewed with an exception to Plymouth.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 1st, 1697.

I had the honour of your Grace's letter yesterday, and am very glad you found yourself well enough to undertake so great a journey. I had an opportunity this morning to acquaint all the Lords Justices with the resolution you have taken, and I had told

it to my Lord Chamberlain before, who wishes very much this may bring you sooner up.

Sir Cloudesley Shovel sent us advice yesterday of the King's landing on Tuesday. Your Grace has it enclosed both from him and Mr. Blathwayte.

By my Lord Chancellor's directions, I gave notice to the Lords Justices, and desired them to meet at ten this morning. Six of them were present. My Lord Steward went for Newmarket yesterday. The Lords of the Treasury attended to acquaint them with the orders they had received from Margate to furnish money for carrying eight battalions, and how difficult it was for them to comply with it, unless other services were disappointed, particularly the general officers could have nothing, for this service alone would take up 35,000*l.* what in clearing their quarters and paying their transportation. They were directed to make a state of it in writing; and the general officers likewise give in a memorial of their wants, and they are both sent by express (and I hope will reach the packet-boat, the wind being easterly,) that they may be laid before the King, and his pleasure signified whether there be an immediate occasion for sending away those battalions.

My Lord Romney told the Lords that the King spoke to him, as if he thought he should open the campaign with some seige (perhaps Dunkirk or Ypres), and therefore ordered musters to be hastened over.

Their Excellencies have signed my Lord Orford's

bill, but I hear nothing of my Lord Chancellor's; perhaps that is at a stand.

I sent your Grace an account to Woburne how he received my message, and refer to that letter, which my Lord Wharton's servant has brought up.

My Lord Chancellor writ last night to the King and my Lord Portland, as he said he would.

The bill is signed too for renewing the commission of the Treasury.*

Sir Stephen Fox thinks better of it than to quit:† he would have had a salvo by printing it in the Gazette, that at his desire he was excused from being first commissioner. Mr. Montague don't much approve of that lie; but I think he will be gratified with taking no notice at all of the new commission.

The Lords Justices have appointed to meet their usual days, and will come earlier. The council will always be held on Thursday in the afternoon, and Mr. Secretary is to have notice that they desire he will be with them in the morning, that it may be considered what is to be done there.

The next week they will take the business of Long and charter of Wexford into consideration.

I was this morning with my Lady Westmoreland about Brown; she has provided bail for him, and will employ one to advise him to propose it. If he find it in the least insisted on, the person was to

* Placing Montague at the head of that board.

† Sir Stephen Fox claimed the post of First Lord, and threatened to resign on Montague's appointment.

come to town to-night, and I shall hear from her what is done in it.

My Lord Wharton is gone to Newmarket, and is expected back on Tuesday; therefore I shall keep his key till then.

The King, I hear, would stay a very few days at the Hague, and then go to Loo, where he may be clearer from French assassins.

The Treasury have issued to my Lord Ranelagh upwards of 270,000*l.* in exchequer bills for clearing the quarters to the 1st of January.

We had advice this morning from Hythe and Romney of two or three hundred ships seen off those places, which they took to be French. We hear since it was the Dutch St. Habes* fleet under the convoy of six men-of-war.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 4th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 1st instant, and have shewn it to my Lord Chancellor and Lord Chamberlain when they met together this morning, and have given them the Bishop of Salisbury's papers,† which they will take a time to consider, and are already of your Grace's opinion, that they must come out as the observations of some private person.

* So in MS. † Burnet.

My Lord Chamberlain directed me to let you know he forebore writing to you merely to save you the trouble of answers, and that you might have your thoughts only employed upon the speediest ways to recover your health.

The Earl of Rochester coming hither last night to tell me that when he waited on the King the night before his journey, his Majesty told him he should have his leave to take a deputation from the Earl of Clarendon for the rangership of Whichwood; and adding, that if your Grace were in town you would take his word that the King had declared his pleasure, and accordingly put it into a way of despatch, I told him I hoped your Grace's absence would not occasion any delay, if he would give me leave to acquaint my Lord Chancellor with it; which he approved of, and I mentioned it to my Lord Chancellor this morning, who saw no difficulty in it; but he thought fit that I (should) write to Mr. Blathwayte about it, and he would in the meantime look into the act and consider how it was to be done. I have therefore sent to Mr. Blathwayte, who I hope will send me the King's answer without letting my Lord Rochester know that he has been employed in it, though I distrust his officiousness in this point.

The Dutch post arrived this afternoon. Mr. Blathwayte gives your Grace an account of his Majesty's indisposition in a short letter that he writ that day at one o'clock: he says his Majesty had

been blooded, and was much refreshed by it, and that he hopes to give an account in his next of his perfect recovery.

My Lord Villiers and Mr. Hall give your Grace an account of the conferences.

Mr. Prior writes me word that my Lord Villiers had recommended him to the King for secretary to the Lords Justices of Ireland. I believe he will succeed in it, Mr. Overton telling me this evening that he heard my Lord Chamberlain say he was to be the man.* * * * * *

I saw my Lady Westmoreland yesterday, who told me bail would be provided for Brown, and he was advised how he should apply to Mr. Secretary. I am therefore surprised to receive a letter from him this evening, a copy whereof is enclosed. I am sorry he has found me out to make his addresses to. I shall endeavour to-morrow to know the meaning of it.

My Lord Chamberlain acquainted the Lords Justices to-day that the King was willing Fielding should be in the general pardon. I find Mr. Attorney is almost as scrupulous of reversing the outlawry as my Lord Chief Baron was for the same reason. My Lord Chancellor keeps to his former opinion, that there is less inconvenience in the pardon: accordingly the warrant is sent to Mr. Blathwayte this night.

* A part I have here omitted, relating only to the delay of the eight battalions demanded by William, and to the death of the Bishop of Meath, with considerations regarding the appointment of a new bishop.

I come now from my Lord Rochester's, who intends to see my Lord Chancellor and takes his answer kindly. I intend to write to Mr. Blathwayte, not by way of inquiry what the King would have done, but as taking it for granted that the King has consented, and that my Lord Chancellor understands it so, and therefore he will consider of the method of doing it. If the King dislikes it, I suppose we shall hear of it; and perhaps it may not be finished till then. My Lord asked whether I thought it necessary he should write to your Grace, but I supposed that trouble might be spared on both sides.

Sir Richard Onslow was with me yesterday, and said something mysterious from Renew. I found him tied up from naming anybody; but when I told him what I could do as to the getting Godel's letters inspected, he approved of it, and accordingly I writ to Mr. Spence, and have his answer that he will take care in it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 6th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 3rd inst. I mentioned the French assassins from what I heard from some of our great ones, but I understand no more by it but a zealous provident care on one side, and a willingness to go the sooner to Loo on the other.

Mr. Yard sends constantly to the Admiralty an extract of all advices as they come. I told my Lord Orford* what your Grace thought of sending out an advice boat from time to time, and he says orders shall be given for it this evening. We had no letter from Monsieur Jurieu by the last post; I let him know of the failure at the same time.

We hear nothing more of my Lord Chancellor's bill. I perceive he will stay at least till he hears again from my Lord Portland in answer to the letter he sent him. His Lordship sent me a letter yesterday, a copy whereof is enclosed, relating to my Lord Rochester's business. I thought it was writ to be shewn him, and therefore I carried it to him this morning; he was well satisfied with it, and desires he may be despatched by the Lords Justices. To that end he will bring up his deputation the first time he goes to Richmond, which I have acquainted my Lord Chancellor with, and then he will have it proposed to the Lords Justices.

I was with my Lady Westmoreland yesterday and this morning, and Mr. Jones was there this time. He had been with Brown, and brought him more into temper; he shewed me a letter he had writ yesterday, wherein he lays hearty curses upon all English Catholics, and he had been at Mr. Secretary's office railing and storming that bail was required of him; but he was brought to consent to make another trial.

* Admiral Russell.

Kitson the messenger coming into the office this evening tells me he is just now bailed, having only one man bound with him. It is for his appearance at the King's Bench the first day of next term; so I hope that matter is over.

My Lord Wharton came to town last night: this morning I carried him his key. He hopes your Grace will make use of Woburne some other time, and thinks too you were in the right to go on, since you could bear it. He hears that my Lord Chamberlain has spoken a little doubtful of the peace.

The Lords Justices met this morning, and my Lord Steward was with them. He has lost one match at Newmarket, and the other with my Lord Godolphin was withdrawn. Mr. Secretary was with them, and received their directions about the matters to be proposed at council.

My Lord Orford acquainted their Excellencies with the want of provisions for fitting out the fleet, for as to pease, flour, and oatmeal, there was not enough for three days, and without a competent supply the ships at Portsmouth, in the Downs, and at the Nore, could never join: that the victuallers say they can do no more unless money be ordered, and if they could have 50,000*l.* more in Exchequer bills they would undertake to furnish the fleet with provisions for two months; and they desired the money might be appropriated to that use. Whereupon the Lords of the Treasury were sent for, and it is settled the victuallers shall have that sum,

though it exceeds their proportion, they having lately had 100,000*l.* in bills, and that there is this further inconvenience by the glut of them, that there is already a discount of 5*l.* per cent. upon the victuallers' bills which is not observed anywhere else. Care must likewise be taken of paying bounty money to the seamen, and for their short allowance.

Monsieur Allemonde has told the Admiralty that four ships of their quota are gone with Captain Meese to the West Indies, which will be represented to his Majesty that their places may be supplied, our number being complete.

Sir George Rooke attended the Lords Justices this day, and told them he would go to the Nore to-morrow. Sir Cloudesley Shovel is come up from the Downs, but makes a very short stay.

There was yesterday a general court of the Bank held: it was proposed to them, for encouraging the subscription of tallies, that they would discharge the interest to the 24th of June upon such Bank bills as should be subscribed; but they did not think fit to consent to it. The Directors were likewise tried whether they would furnish 50,000*l.* in specie, and take Exchequer bills for it. They have no mind to do it, and yet would not be known who are the refusers; and therefore they determined it by a new way of a ballot, and there were but 3 of 19 for it.

The convoy with the recruits are to go away on Monday next.

The Lords Justices met this afternoon in council,

and ordered two proclamations, one about the leather duty, the other about the receivers of taxes, who are complained of for the difficulties and delays in taking of the hammered money at *5s.* 8*d.* per ounce, raising often unnecessary scruples what is standard or not.

Mr. Dodson, a commissioner of the capitation in Yorkshire, complained of one Appleby, a Roman Catholic, who treated him with violence in the execution of his office. It is ordered that Appleby be taken into custody, and it is intended he shall be prosecuted to the utmost.

The clerk of the council is ordered to demand the seals of the Duchy from the Lord Willoughby, and next council day they will be delivered to the Earl of Stamford.

Some considerations were had of the pouring Scotch money into the North, which is ten per cent. worse than ours, but nothing was done upon it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Whitehall, May 8, 1796.

The Dutch mail arrived early this morning. Mr. Blathwayte gives you Grace an account of his Majesty's recovery, and intentions to go to Loo about this time.

Mr. Blathwayte signifying his Majesty's pleasure to both the Lords Justices and to the Treasury,

that the eight battalions should be sent over; and that six of them should be sent before, and not stay for the other two, who are quartered at a greater distance, the Lords Justices met upon it this morning, and the Lords of the Treasury, the Earl of Ranelagh, and Mr. Clarke were with them. It was resolved, in order to give this matter all convenient despatch, that my Lord Ranelagh should begin with paying off the quarters of those regiments to the 1st of January, and that Mr. Clarke should write to the officers, to state and adjust the accounts of their quarters from January to the beginning of May. Not that this latter account will be now discharged, but only be in a readiness to take their share, when others are paid for the same time; and to enable them to march, the Treasury will advance one month's subsistence to each regiment, and three months to the officers. This money, and what is necessary for the transportation, the Lords of the Treasury say they must take out of the remaining 50,000*l.* part of 200,000*l.* they are to remit to Flanders, they having no other money or bills at present but what are appropriated. This charge will amount to about 15,000*l.*

It is not intended that any of the battalions should go with the embarcation that is now ready, and, I suppose, will sail about the middle of next week; but another opportunity will be taken for sending them. In the meantime their Excellencies have thought fit to lay before the King the inconveniences

of sending away such a force before the fleet is in a condition to go to sea for the protection of the coast, which lies open now more than ever, which is already sent away, and perhaps may come time enough to go with this mail.

I had a letter from my Lord Portland by this post, who writ likewise to my Lord Chancellor. He seems concerned that my Lord has stopped his grant; he would much rather he had gone on with it, and first taken care my Lord Portland had the full effect of his prior grant, and then have computed the remainder to himself, which, if it fell short, he was to be reprised for by some other gift. But I find my Lord Chancellor don't like journey-work to another patent, and will leave matters as they are. However, he will write to him again.

I send your Grace a letter I received for you yesterday from the Madeiras, giving an account of a present made you of some trees, seeds, and plants. I have taken a copy of it, and employed Mr. Manley to look after it at the Custom-house, and my Lord Wharton has given leave that the things be carried to his garden at Chelsea, there they will be looked after, and he promises they shall be forthcoming whenever your Grace would dispose of them elsewhere.

I omitted to send on Thursday the copy of my Lord Chancellor's letter concerning my Lord Rochester; it is now enclosed.

The Marquis of Winchester was here yesterday;

he talks still of going on Tuesday se'nnight. I find my Lord Coningsby and Phil Savage have got within him; they say the business shall be done by him, and he shall have the credit of it; so the Whig party is left to my Lord Galway's share.

I send your Grace a letter of Richard Long's, which I opened, supposing it might contain something I was to take care of. His memorials are sent this evening to the Treasury and Admiralty; I wish he may at last perform any part of what he undertakes.

Mr. Spence brings me a letter of Mr. Gaudet's, wherein he mentions one Roquette, a Frenchman lately come into England, and that he narrowly escaped at Weymouth by pretending himself a refugee. I have given his name to my Lord Galway, who concerns himself to find out reprisals, and therefore will employ those who may discover him

Yesterday the Earls of Bath and Montague had their trial at the King's Bench upon the information of perjury. It lasted all night and till six this morning, when the court adjourned till Monday: the jury are agreed on a private verdict, which both sides flatter themselves is in their favour.

There had been a hearing yesterday in Chancery between my Lord Steward and the Marquis of Normanby, but that the great council were engaged in the other cause; so it is put off till next week.

The Lords Justices have sent to the Admiralty to

take care of transporting Sir James Rushout and his family to Constantinople.

My Lord Bellamonte has accommodated his matters at the Treasury. They assign him the two years' arrears of his rent-charge upon the revenue in Ireland, which helps to satisfy some of his creditors. So he is now preparing in earnest for his voyage to New England, and hopes to be gone in a fortnight or three weeks.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 10th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter, and take the opportunity of Mr. Glen's going to Eyford to acknowledge it. He brings you one of Mr. Dryden's translations of Virgil, which Mr. Montague has procured for your Grace; the impression, he says, will not be published yet some time. I shall let my Lord Chancellor know to-morrow what your Grace writes concerning him.

I do not comprehend what is intended as to Prior, whether he is to leave the Hague to attend his new employment. Phil Savage, I perceive, thinks he is not yet coming, and he is for proposing to the Marquis of Winchester that Palmer should continue to officiate during his absence, and would have me join in it, but I excused myself from meddling.

I thought the late management of Irish affairs tended to have a secretary who was of no party, and to avoid as much as may be any declarations of that kind; others I find are as industrious to break into those measures, and they presume on an influence they have over the Marquis. It is well if he order it so as to make use of their interest for carrying on the King's business without delivering up his own sentiments, and altering his notions as he changes the climate. I believe he will take Eyford in his way to Chester, and make your Grace a short visit: you will then best understand how he intends to conduct himself.

Brown was with me this morning to let me know he was out again upon bail, and he desired to know what directions I would give him. I only told him I was glad he was at liberty, but as for directions I had never yet given him any, and I was an ill adviser in other men's matters; so he civilly took his leave, and I hope I shall have no more of his applications. I shall let my Lady Westmoreland know of this visit, though I don't doubt but he has already been told that it is best for him to retire from the town.

The verdict was brought in this morning for the Earl of Bath, and one Harris, a witness of my Lord Montague's, is convicted of perjury, and another, who came to support his testimony, is ordered to be prosecuted for the like crime.

This second man undertook to prove Sir John

Coppleston was at the assizes at Wells on the 22d of June, (16)81, and to make it out, produced his almanack with the memorandum of that passage.

It happened very unluckily for him the lawyers remembered the assizes were held that year at Bath and not at Wells, those places having them alternately, and this was made appear by the record.

Upon this suspicion they examined his almanack, and found a leaf or two sewed in, out of which he read his remarks. Upon examination it appeared that the assizes were held at Wells in (16)82, and upon the 22d of June. It was concluded, therefore, he might see Sir John there at that time, and the man having brought several almanacks into court to shew what his practice was in writing things down, they called for his almanack of (16)82, but that he had it not to produce.

The court is sitting now upon another of these trials. But the great lawyers of my Lord Montague's side have given out, and did not appear today, viz., Sergeant Rawlinson, Gold Wright, and Sir Thomas Powis; so there only remains counsel of much lesser figure with Mr. Sloen.

The Dutch post is not yet arrived.

The enclosed came under Mr. Rowley's cover; it is a little torn by one seal being clapped on another.

My Lord Wharton had an opportunity to be farther satisfied about the news he heard, and it was not so discouraging as was at first reported.

There will be occasion for more passes, Mr. Glen

takes some with him if your Grace will please to sign them. Sir Richard Onslow's letter will be sent him to-morrow. I hope Monsieur Renew will follow your Grace's advice, and communicate his secret to Mr. Secretary. One is made amends for his jealousy by being eased from any trouble with him.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 11th, 1697.

The Dutch post not being yet arrived, there is little to add to what I writ yesterday by Mr. Glen. I have made your Grace's compliments to my Lord Chancellor, and you will sometimes hear from him.

Mr. Charlton came to me last night, and was very full of going down to Eyford, having resolved to set out this day and to reach thither by Thursday. All the business he pretended was that his friend Colt enjoined it, and it was to impart some things he had left untold when he waited on your Grace; and in conclusion, they hear Neale is dying. Colt would fain be Master-worker of the Mint, and Charlton is to solicit your Grace to recommend him to my Lord Keeper. I thought this no great occasion for a journey, and that your Grace would be willingly excused from such a visit, and therefore I did all I could to put it by. I would have persuaded him that he might do as much by writing, and so save the

trouble of a journey, and when that would not do: he alledging his promises to Colt, and that he would not be satisfied otherwise: he urged me to tell him how much quiet and ease the doctors thought necessary for your health; that your friends were so sensible of it that none of them yet thought of making you a visit; that the King had forbid you to write or meddle with business; and lastly, I did not know whether he would find you at Eyford, since I heard, when you were well enough, you had designed to see your house in Worcestershire.

I think his journey is stopped at present, and he says he'll write to Colt that he did not think it proper to wait on you while all other visits are forborne. He insinuated what a humour Colt was of, and that disappointments would make him ungovernable, but I checked that by saying I hoped Mr. Colt would find friends on account of his merits and good qualities, but not for any fear of him.

I am ashamed to trouble your Grace with so impertinent a relation, but I can't forbear being scandalized at persons who are so mischievously busy.

The King's Bench have sat all night again, and rose not till seven this morning, leaving a judge on the bench to take the verdict, which agrees with the former; and Duck, another of my Lord Montague's witnesses, is convicted of perjury. What I heard yesterday of some great counsel leaving the cause was not so, but they were only plying in other courts while they sat and stuck to this all night. There

goes a bye-word round the hall, said to be my Lord Chief Justice Treby's, that this cause is overstocked.

The Lords Justices met to-day, but had little to do. They are now at council, which is called for a further prorogation of Parliament: the day appointed for it is the 17th of June.

The Admiralty have advice by express that the Bilboa fleet is arrived off Scilly's; they are eight merchantmen under the convoy of three men-of-war. Four or five French men-of-war kept them company good part of the way, but did not think fit to attack them. It is said that Rear-Admiral Benbow was in pursuit of the French men-of-war, whom he gave chase to.

The Earl of Stamford took his oath this evening as Chancellor of the Duchy, and had the seals delivered him.

The council designed to take the Irish bills into consideration, but Mr. Attorney coming late, it is put off till Monday. We hear Sir Richard Temple died on Saturday.

The Lords Justices had a letter read to them from Mr. George Parker, complaining of the abusive behaviour of Mr. Adderly while they were executing the commission for the taxes. The Lords have sent for an affidavit of it, and then will have it brought to council.

The Earl of Bellemont's commission and instructions are brought to the office, with an order of

council for their despatch. So they will be done here, and the Lords Justices will sign them.

Sir Joseph Williamson took his leave of the Lords Justices this day, and thinks of embarking to-morrow or next day.

The hearing between my Lord Steward and the Marquis of Normanby is put off till after Whitsuntide.

I send by this post a bill for 4,000 florins to Monsieur Jurieu.

My Lady Westmoreland is pleased to write me word that Brown has been spoke to, and he promises to go ten or twelve miles out of town, and stay there till next term. I hope he will consider in the meantime how he will dispose of himself next.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 13th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 10th. The directions came time enough to prevent the plants being carried to Chelsea. I sent to Mr. Manley, and he was with me last night. He expects the ship will be cleared on Friday. He has the name of the inn of the Grafton carrier, who goes out on Saturdays, so perhaps they may be sent away immediately.

I have given Long his papers again, and he begs your Grace's pardon for sending them. I don't find

the Treasury intend to furnish the 200*l.* he demands, looking upon his proposal as a chimera. The Admiralty will furnish him with a ship, and he is for taking it without the money; but the Treasury ought at least so far to concern themselves as to take the security for the King's share of the wrecks, if they are found. I spoke to Mr. Montague of it last night, but whether he will think of it more I know not.

As for Brown, your Grace has an account how he has promised to dispose of himself at present. I hope he has not changed his mind as to what he should do next. If I may presume to offer my opinion, it will be fittest for him to go into Ireland, when the court has discharged him. It is his native country, and he will live best and cheapest in a potatoe ground. I fear his continuing in England would be very incommodious, and I can't see what he should do abroad. It will not be proper to put him into the army, and for want of employment he may run over to France, and then he would not be recoverable whatever the occasion might be, though my Lord Chamberlain tells my Lord Orford that the Earl of M——* talks only of following the plough, and his wife of being a dairywoman, yet nobody takes them at their word. If Brown be in Ireland, the Marquis of Winchester or Lord Galway may be spoke to about him, that they may have an eye upon him and see him forthcoming.

* Monmouth.

The Dutch post arrived yesterday. There being no letter from Mr. Blathwayte to your Grace, I send a copy of what he writ to me, with the letters of Mr. Hall and Mr. Prior, and the papers from the Hague and Zalesteyn, which contain all that is news.

Mr. Vice-Chamberlain Sayers tells me that he had a letter from his brother, who is in waiting. He writes the King is as good as recovered, he sleeps well, only his appetite is a little abated. He had been twice a hare-hunting, and found himself the better for it.

Mr. Blathwayte has returned the instructions for the Lords Justices of Ireland signed, with a warrant for administering the oaths to them, and delivering up the sword, which is enclosed for your Grace's countersigning. You will please to send it back by Monday, that all may be delivered to the Justices together; they will take their leave of the Lords Justices on Tuesday next, and begin their journey on Wednesday.

I send your Grace a copy of all the ill account the Admiralty have received of the Barbadoes outward bound convoy, writ by the commander of the Norwich. It seems they sailed straggling to look out for booty, and were made a prey themselves.

But there is an advice likewise of taking three French privateers, and one of them of force.

The parliament met to-day and was prorogued to the 17th of June: the Speaker of the House of

Commons is out of town. It seems there are precedents of their being absent on the like occasion.

The convoy for Holland sailed early this morning: the Duke of Ormond, Lord Rivers, and Sir Joseph Williamson, embarked yesterday in the evening.

This being a holiday, the council did not meet; my Lord Chancellor being gone to take the air, four of the Lords Justices met only to sign the bill for the commission of the Lords Justices of Ireland. I have a letter to lay before them to-morrow from Dr. Hyde. He has carried his patent down to Oxford, and can find nobody to admit him. The dean is in town, it being his month in waiting as chaplain; the sub-dean and senior canons got out of the way; so he only spoke with Dr. Jane, who said he had nothing to do to admit him. Dr. Hyde hears that in the college they deny the place to be vacant.

The Earl of Tankerville called here to-day to enquire of your Grace's health. I found him doubly concerned at the miscarriage of the Barbadoes convoy, both as a commissioner for the Plantations, and of kin to the government of Barbadoes. I wish we don't hear of this matter in the winter: some remember already that this convoy should have sailed several months ago, and that it was very much pressed to have eight men-of-war sent. The want of provisions is but a scurvy plaster for our sores.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 15th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 12th, and find there was a mistake made in addressing myself to my Lord Chancellor instead of my Lord Chamberlain. I beg your Grace's pardon for it, but it could be of no consequence, and I have made the compliment over again to my Lord Chamberlain, who I perceive has no present occasion for writing. He says he only desires to hear that your Grace has begun a milk diet; whether you do or not, I am glad your Grace feels yourself plumping up, whence one may conclude there is nothing amiss within.

I have read to the Lords Justices what your Grace writes about a Roman Catholic gentleman who designs to go with his family to Nimeguen or Cleves, and desires a pass for it; they approve of it very well, and if your Grace please to send his name, a pass shall be prepared and sent to Mr. Blathwayte for the King's hand. Your Grace will likewise give directions whether it should be in Latin or in English; if it be shewn abroad, Latin will be soonest understood there. I suppose it must be dated the 23d of April for your Grace's countersigning.

I'll take an opportunity to speak to my Lord Chancellor about Brown, but that is not pressing, since he must stay out next term, and I would wil-

lingly know your Grace's thoughts about his going to Ireland. I mentioned it to my Lord Orford, who thinks it the fittest place.

Ben Overton and I have formerly had some discourse about the Marquis ;* he thinks him not very governable, and apprehends he will busy himself the wrong way. The advice he gave him was to enjoy the sweets of his employment, and not to set up for a manager. He did not tell him he would do it awkwardly ; but he was to expect others would have the secret, and he would find the most ease, and perhaps give the greatest satisfaction, in yielding to the current.

The Marquis came to town last night from Hampshire, and Lord Galway is expected this evening from Oxford. We shall have them with the Lords Justices on Tuesday, and perhaps they will be going in a day or two after. The Marquis still talks of striking out of the road upon his pad and making your Grace a visit.

Your Grace has but a slender account of your plants from Madeira, Mr. Manley telling me something of it yesterday, but he had not then spoke with the master. I desired he would find him out, and get him to put into writing what he had to say in his excuse, which is here enclosed.

We had a Dutch mail this morning, though, the wind being so high these two days, I hardly expected it.

* Of Winchester.

Mr. Blathwayte gives your Grace an account of their being at Breda, and that his Majesty is well recovered. We may conclude the King is now at Halle.

Mr. Van Halls writes me word that a council of war had been held, where he does not mention, but I suppose at Bruxelles, and that the Generals all agreed in opinion, which the King has likewise approved of, that the relief of the place* ought to be attempted. It is owned their numbers are more than ours, but it being an action chiefly for foot, and our infantry being judged to be better than theirs, it is thought there may be hopes of success. I find others are of opinion that we may look on as the French did at Namur. The enclosed Hague letter gives an account of the condition of the garrison and of the posture of the besiegers.

I send likewise a copy of Mr. Prior's letter, which mentions how little they do at the congress. The private intimation he requires in the name of the plenipotentiaries I shall send him as my Lord Chancellor thinks fit. I think there should be something more communicated to the Lords Justices in relation to the treaty than I yet find. Perhaps Mr. Secretary does it to some of them when he is in town, but that has not been since yesterday se'nnight.

Mr. Hill writes to your Grace.

I had a few lines from my Lord Portland; he seems a little concerned that my Lord Chancellor

* Ath, to which the French army had laid siege.

does not go on with his grant and see his reprisals made good, and then take the rest of the fee farms, and inch out what is wanting with some other grant. I gather from hence that he distrusts his own grant will not be effectual without my Lord Chancellor's assistance, and I believe he is not disposed to afford it to him.

Mr. Blathwayte has sent over three warrants, which you will please to countersign; they were all prepared by the Lords Justices' directions, viz., for Colonel Fielding being inserted in the general pardon, for twenty-one poor convicts the Recorder wanted a warrant for, and the Major to the Ordnance in Ireland, which my Lord Romney and Lord Galway moved the King in at Margate.

Mr. Blathwayte writes that the King does not think the Dunkirk squadron (as the Admiralty designed it) strong enough, it consisting only of one third-rate, five four-rates, and a fifth-rate, and therefore would have the number encreased out of the main fleet, and his Majesty intended that a proportionable number of Dutch ships should be added to act in conjunction with them, and the Dutch would likewise supply the four ships gone with Captain Meese, which were taken out of their quota for the main fleet.

The sending over the eight battalions is pressed again. It is supposed the fleet will now be soon at sea, and that there is little to be apprehended here, the enemy's troops being otherwise diverted.

The Lords Justices had that matter of the battalions under consideration yesterday, and Mr. Clark giving them an account that the transport ships could hardly be got ready before Monday se'nnight, and by that time five of the regiments may be got to the places where they should embark. He is directed to issue out the necessary orders accordingly, and another embarcation will be appointed as soon as may be for the remaining three battalions.

On Tuesday next the Treasury, Admiralty, and Victuallers are to be with the Lords Justices. It is for enforcing a proposal the Treasury have made to the Victuallers, who declaring their inablity to furnish provisions, but according to the quantity of ready money, they shall, from time to time, be supplied with, the inconvenience hereof is foreseen; and therefore it is proposed to them to state their debt, and consent to the discharge of it at once by tallies, which may be had, there being for 1,400,000*l.* in the hands of the Treasurer of the navy, that can't be employed towards paying the yards and seaman's wages; and then beginning one new account, and settling a course of payments, they may help themselves and the public, as other offices do, with part money and part credit.

This Mr. Papillon hitherto opposes, and if the Lords can induce him or his creditors to give way to the proposal, they will do a great work, otherwise they don't think any thing less than a parliament can use compulsion in this case.

Mr. Lord Galway has brought another letter of Robins' to the Lords Justices. I send you the copy of it, and it is in itself pretty singular and remarkable. The Lords Justices do not expect any wonderful advice, but conclude the man has laid a design to secure the money, or to have wherewithal to ground a complaint upon; and whatever shall happen amiss this year, may be the secret he was to impart if he had not been neglected. Therefore, they were of opinion, the money should be paid him in the manner proposed, and that even yesterday's post should not be let slip. Whereupon I undertook to lay down the money, and accordingly sent for Robins, and have paid him fifty guineas, promising him fifty more when the advice came, and proved satisfactory to their Excellencies, and took his receipt for it according to the contents of his letter.

My Lord Chancellor told me when they were up, that the Treasury should repay me the money; if they voluntarily order it, I shall not oppose, but otherwise I believe your Grace would best approve of my not putting them any more in mind of it.

Having met with a letter of an officer of the Ordnance, concerning the loss of the Barbadoes convoy, which seems to relate the matter more frankly than Captain Symonds, I send it enclosed. We hear of six of these ships arrived at Falmouth and Plymouth.

We may expect to hear of a yet greater misfortune from the West Indies. Mr. Powey showed

me a letter yesterday from Sir William Beeston, who tells him in the postscript, they have advice that Tomlis's squadron arrived at Petit Guaves on the 23rd of February. They should do all they could for their defence at Jamaica, but did not think themselves in a condition to resist such a force. He refers for a further account to other letters he had sent, but I have not seen any for your Grace, nor do I know that the Lords of the Plantations have any from him.

Sir Thomas Southwell calling here this evening, I let him know your Grace's recommendations had prevailed in his behalf.

Mr. Montague tells me that my Lord Manchester expects an intimation from your Grace, or from somebody else, when he should go upon his embassy. I find it is grounded upon the King's telling him he would not have him go yet. I understood no more by it, but that he might go any time this summer. Your Grace will please to let me know whether you have any directions to give him, or that the Lords Justices be acquainted with it, and then Mr. Blaythwayte to be writ to, to know the King's pleasure.

Mr. Montague seems uneasy that the King did not allow him a secretary of the embassy, as my Lord Falconbridge had. They would take it kindly if your Grace would press it a little further. He says the King did not refuse it, but took time to consider of it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

May 20th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 15th, and have made your compliments to Mr. Montague. I doubt whether the Marquis of Winchester can be diverted from waiting on you: he may be prepared not to find any great accommodation, and I don't find he intended more than a visit, and to be getting forward the same day. Cousin Phil. Savage, I perceive, comes along with him, so I question whether your Grace will have an opportunity of discoursing him with any great freedom. You may try the influence they have over him if you please to ask him when they expect Prior, and how his place will be supplied during his absence. Savage presses him to continue Palmer, who was a known creature of the Chancellor's, and a tool of the party. Though I am a little related to him by his wife, yet I was so disinterested as to insinuate to the Marquis it might be worth consideration, whether, since the King thought fit to remove Palmer and appoint another, they had not better part with him at once, than be doing it over and over. I thought Mr. May, their second secretary, might officiate in the meantime, who performed that part to my Lord Blessington and Wolseley, and the under clerks continuing, the business might go on well enough. He did not contradict it, but I suppose the resolutions are taken

for him, though I think Palmer will be as little agreeable to one party as Mr. Brodrick would be to the other. Not that his parts are so considerable, but his inclinations are as rank.

I had an opportunity at the rising of the Council yesterday to speak with my Lord Chancellor about Brown. He approves very well of his going to Ireland as soon as he is discharged, and wishes he may keep out of sight in the meantime. His Lordship was offended that he has come so often of late to his house, he waited four hours one day while the causes were hearing. He has not spoke with my Lord, but he did with one of his servants, and his demands are for a supply of money. My Lord sent him for answer that he was not to expect it from him, nor could he from any body else except the King. His Lordship apprehends a great inconvenience if Lord M——* should take notice of his resort to him.

I went to Lady Westmoreland and told her what I had heard, and that it was thought the best way to dispose him to go for Ireland, and to keep him from running into people's mouths. In the meantime she says she will send for her friend, and do all she can in it. He has had the whole sum ordered him, and when he had 40*l.* the last payment, he was surprised and overjoyed, and in the transport of it, he would fain have given 10*l.* to him that brought it. I can't well distinguish whether he has been at my Lord Chancellor's since he received this money;

* Monmouth?

perhaps it would have been better to have given it him by degrees, and to have kept part of it for his journey to Ireland, or otherwise I fear he will want a recruit for that purpose.

Lady Sunderland thanks you for your kindness in promising to procure for Mr. Baber the secretaryship of Jamaica.

Lord Aylesbury is discharged.*

Means are proposed to victual the squadron.

Mr. Secretary Trumbull having acquainted my Lord Chancellor that the Spanish Ambassador pressed him by Monsieur Hofman for a positive answer whether a squadron were to be speedily sent to the Straights or not, because without it Barcelona must be lost, or Catalonia found to agree to a neutrality. The answer their Excellencies resolved upon was, that his Majesty had given directions for preparing such a number of ships as might be fit to form a squadron to be sent to the Mediterranean, and that those orders were putting in execution with all possible expedition, and his Majesty's further pleasure was expected therein.

I send your Grace the account I received from my Lady Westmoreland about Brown. I see this is an ungovernable animal, who chooses his country-seat from whence he may be every day in town.

* He had been imprisoned with others implicated in the plot to assassinate the King, and there were serious thoughts of trying him for high treason.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 10th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 7th, and have acquainted Mr. Yard with what you directed.

Mr. Chancey has been with Sir Edward Harley, who returns your Grace his thanks for your concern for his son's health; this is the fourteenth day since he fell ill, and they think him in a fair way of recovery.

I have not heard of my Lord Chancellor* to-day, but I called at his house yesterday, and they told me the doctor found my Lord so well, that he left off his constant visits, and would not go that day. His Lordship now sits up four or five hours at a time. So that I think one may leave off enquiring, when the physicians leave off visiting.

Mr. Rowley going to Worcestershire to-morrow, and telling me he could carry a small thing with him, I have packed up Smith's book† and put it into his hands, by which means your Grace will receive it on Monday next, some days before the arrival of the carrier. I read the book and remarks with as much patience as I could, I don't find the copies of the letters vary from the originals I have in my keeping. It was not to be supposed he would venture that,

* Somers was attacked with a violent fever in the beginning of June.

† Smith continued from time to time to renew his claim for reward, and assail the Duke of Shrewsbury.

fearing they might be confronted, but some letters he may have omitted. I observe one in January, by which he acquaints your Grace, he makes no difficulty in coming to me, since your Grace was satisfied with my fidelity, but then it must not be at Whitehall. I know not whether this was designedly left out of his book, but a fellow that has been so exact in keeping so many paltry letters, methinks should not have lost this out of his bundle. I am apt to believe he would swear he has delivered in the copies of all he ever writ, if it should be ever worth while to put him to it. But as his letters may be true enough, I am sure his remarks are stuffed with notorious lies and inventions, framed for the purposes as he designed them, of a malicious accuser, which your Grace will easily observe in many places, as I have done in others.

One conversation he makes me present at towards the end of February or beginning of March, at which he tells you that Holmes lay with him the night before, and I asked him why he did not seize him, to which he makes a wise answer, that I did not repeat. He would have it understood of Major Holmes. Now it is both a lie that either Holmes lay with him or that he said it. I very well remember he spoke of old England's lodging at his house at that time, that he was an old fat lethargy man, as he called him, and not fit to be taken up, since he was not concerned. It is endless to repeat what one is satisfied are falsities, and yet with one of that folly

and impudence one knows not how to disprove them, otherwise than by honestly asserting the contrary.

Your Grace will remark that he is ample in his accounts of telling his story to the Duke of Norfolk and Monsieur Keppel, but not a word of my Lord M.* and Mr. Secretary, from whence I suspect they have seen the minutes as well as the letters, if one of them has not had a hand in dressing them up.

He lays a stress upon a letter I writ to him to know where Mr. Brown was to be found; from whence he would imply his material informations were passed over, and that things only of little consequence taken notice of, whereas this passage is a strong confirmation of what I always said of him, that one could never make any use of what he pretended to discover. That he had mentioned Holmes as coming over upon dangerous designs, and was always pressed to tell where he might be taken, and this he never could be brought to, and the reason of sending to him about Brown was for a trial, whether he could make out any thing he said, for a man who had so much the secret of the party as he pretended, would have been entrusted with their lodgings, and it would have been for his credit to make something appear when it was so often required.

His denying this satisfaction, joined with an obscure and confounding way of telling his story, together with sharping pretences for craving money, was that which gave me such a jealousy and mean

* Monmouth.

opinion of him, that I could never bring myself to believe one word he said of any kind. And this is the truth of his case, notwithstanding his own false glosses, or the mistaken ideas that other people may frame to themselves concerning it.

It was I that sent your Grace the old Gazette; I only made use of it to wrap the key in, that it might not eat into any of the papers.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 12th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 9th, and have sent the enclosed to my Lord Rochester. I did not think any little respect I could pay him would be the subject of a letter to your Grace. He is not only beforehand with me for the services I am capable of, but he receives one's acknowledgements in such a manner as to ground new obligations upon them.

My Lord Chancellor goes on with his recovery; he is broke out with a kind of rash all over his body, which has helped to carry off the fever, and the doctor advises his lying longer in bed and keeping warm, that the humour may quite spend itself, and he be the healthier for it hereafter. I believe it will be ten or twelve days before one can expect to see him abroad.

Your letter to my Lord Chamberlain was given

him while the Lords Justices were sitting; he read to them that part of it which mentions your coming up, which they were glad to hear of.

My Lord Chancellor's grants both of his *honour* and fee farms are at a stand, and nothing more is said of either. My Lord Portland has likewise some writing about it. I had a letter from him yesterday, he says of my Lord Chancellor—Qu-il étoit sensiblement touché de sa maladie, mais qu-il se rejouissoit infiniment du re-établessement de M. le Duc de Shrewsbury, et de ce qu-il croiroit de revenir si tost à Londres.

Against winter your Grace must consider of some temperament to adjust the different interests of these two, that the House of Peers may not want such a member.

I know not what to say of Brown, he is a giddy-pated fellow that no one can govern. I don't doubt but when he wants money again he will promise to go any where; the question is, whether he will keep to it.

Mrs. Scott is alive, and plies still about Whitehall. She is intending to petition for a pension on account of I know not what services; but I have told her it would not be proper to bring it before the Lords Justices, so she says no more to me about it.

It is a pity you should lose such a piece of antiquity at Grafton. I hope it will produce more of the long lived kind.

Mr. Baker was with me yesterday; I showed him

the warrant for apprehending Gondel,* he desires it may not be executed till Tuesday next. In the meantime he would speak with Renew and take his instructions as to the manner of it, and would have Thom and Gellibrand the messengers to execute it. They shall even take their own way, and I hope that will please them.

A Dutch post arrived yesterday morning. Mr. Blathwayte sends over no directions more than for the three battalions to be despatched, which I suppose will be going next week, if the convoy can be ready so soon. He signifies the King's pleasure that Sir Harry Hobard be a Commissioner of the Customs, and Mr. Jekyll, Chief Justice of Chester. My Lord Chamberlain thought fit to shew me that part of the King's letter, which says he has done it à sa recommendation.

The Lords hereupon have signed Sir Harry Hobard's warrant, being prepared by the Treasury, and will do as much for Mr. Jekyll's bill when it is brought them. He was with me last night, and says his Lordship only expects a direction from the Lords Justices to order the preparing it, which I suppose will be sent him on Tuesday.

As for the news, the camp letter will inform you, the armies were still in the same places, and ours must lie there till Brussels be a little secured. Sir Joseph Williamson will tell you what they are doing

* Supposed to be a French spy, if not worse.

at the Hague; however, I add the account of the Congress at Ryswick, and a haughty letter that orders the Te Deum for Ath.*

Sir George Rook arrived at St. Helens on Thursday last in the evening; there was before at Spithead about thirty men-of-war, English and Dutch, besides three fire-ships. I suppose the Lords of the Admiralty will now send an account of what number of ships they shall have manned and in a condition for service, and then it will better appear how the Mediterranean squadron can be spared. Perhaps this may require the Lords Justices writing themselves to the King, which they have not done yet, and it will hardly be now performed without the assistance of your Grace or my Lord Chancellor, if not both.

Mr. Palmer is labouring to work through with all the demands that are upon his office; he has satisfied about half of them, and therefore I suppose has a prospect of finishing the rest. I wish this had never happened, or that it could be forgot.

The trial that began on Thursday lasted till yesterday morning eight o'clock. The jury would have separated malice from the perjury, but the court not admitting their distinctions, rather than deliberate longer on it, they brought in a verdict of guilty.

An Irish post is just now arrived; by the two enclosed copies of a letter from the Lords Justices,

* Which was taken by the French, while William had barely force sufficient to cover Brussels.

and another from Mr. Justice Cost, your Grace will see all they bring us.

The letters for the Bishopricks were arrived in Ireland, and the Bishop of Clogher is contented to be removed.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

17th of June, 1697.

As to Smith, your Grace spoke to him one evening in my room, but I don't remember he mentioned Holmes to your Grace in your inner room. Whether you asked if Cherbourg were in France, you can tell best; but I remember nothing of it, and do not think it very probable. He makes a long narrative of Kenge, the messenger coming to seize him, the first night the warrants were out for apprehending the plotters, and how heroically he behaved himself, and with what address he turned off the messengers upon midnight Smith. I had never heard anything of this matter before, but was surprised to hear him tell the Committee of Lords, that messengers were employed to seize him and secure his papers, that his discourses might be stifled. Whereas I knew no more of it, as I told the Lords, than he was brought to me as a disaffected man picked up in the Court, and I immediately discharged him, which he owned to the Lords, but suppresses it in his writing. Having reason to suspect this rhodomontade story,

I lately asked Kenge about it, and find there was hardly any thing true in it, more than that he was at his house, but his behaviour was all fear and sneaking, and the person of the man not answering the description given him of the person to apprehend, for they had confounded Perkins's nephew with one that was a tall, fresh coloured man, wearing a fair periwig and a white hat.

The messenger went into the street unknown to this fellow, and enquired of the watchman, whether there was not another Smith, in that neighbourhood, who directed him to midnight Smith, and then went back and took away the guard from this black Smith, obliging him, upon parole, to appear next day at Whitehall. He having made so much use of my name for bringing himself off, I am the longer upon this matter, because my Lord Chancellor thinking it necessary to have wherewithal to convict him of untruths. I don't find it can be done in his letter; but it may be as well if he be satisfied, in his minutes, and if it were worth while, this may be pretty remarkably done, by one who will appear to be a disinterested person.*

* This sentence, though scarcely affording any meaning, is as I find it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

17th of June, 1697.

Sir Harry Colt* came to me yesterday, and said his informers pressed to know, what they should trust to, and whether their offers were accepted; they had given him some of the informations they were to carry to King James. He shewed me one which was a list of names of Northamptonshire people that were adherers to him; and they were to have the like for all the counties, which were furnished by one Mr. Porter,† of the Six Clerk's office, who was to help them likewise to an account of the fleet and army. The person could not tell which way he was to be conveyed over, but he should know it, when he was ready to go, and then have the letters put into his hands. I looked curiously over the list, there I saw Sackville, Tufton, Rider, Lord Feversham, and some whom nobody doubts to be jacobites; but there are others likewise named, who I believe will not thank them for it. He has got in Mr. Cartwright, the parliament man, my Lord Hatton, and the Earl of Northampton, with I know not whom more. This is much as I expected it, and let those who are fond of all sorts of informa-

* A gentleman of property and respectability, but it would seem of very weak understanding, who made himself extremely busy in detecting Jacobites. The papers here referred to were all undoubtedly spurious.

† Written *Pea.*

tions, have their belly full of them. I asked him whether he would not go deeper into it, and take my Lord Chamberlain's opinion about knowing the bottom, and by that time my Lord Chancellor would be at the Board, who in probability knew this Porter, and would be very fit to be consulted how this matter should be managed. I thought he was of my opinion, but this morning he returns again, and said they were impatient to have it laid before the Lords Justices, and would have given me his Northamptonshire lists. I thought he ought either to accompany them with something in writing, to explain the manner of the discovery, or to bring it himself to the Lords Justices. He was best pleased with the latter. Before the Lords sat, my Lord Chamberlain asked me apart about this business, and shewed a mean opinion of it. I proposed it to his Lordship's consideration, whether it would not be best with those informations to let them go on, as far as people would carry them, to let this man know no other, but that he should go over: perhaps he never intends it, or if he did he may be seized, when he is ready to go, or upon the way, and then it may be time to examine how he came by his informations, and confront him with those he had them from. I think my Lord approved of it, and I shall be much mistaken if it will not make an extraordinary scene. When Sir Harry was called in, he gave a very grave account, but not without some doubts, whether much might be made of it, for it

was a very young man was the undertaker, and he was brought to him by Mr. Chaloner.

At the naming him, my Lord Steward asked, whether it were Chaloner the clipper,* and how he came to be at liberty. They read over his list, and saw names that might have been spared; however, they bid him go on with taking the rest of the informations, since four or five counties more were ready for him, and he should advise them to bring him nothing, but what they are well assured of and could make out.

Sir Harry gave a hint they wanted money to proceed. I suppose he will attend every two or three days with the account of the progress he makes.

Mr. Chaloner was putting himself upon me this morning. I think he is afraid Sir Harry will rob him of the honour of his discovery, and not let his name be known. He was sounding me what I knew of it, I owned no more but that Sir Harry had something to reveal to the Lords, but what it was I could not tell, he asked me whether Sir Harry had not told me from whence he had it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 19th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 16th. When your Grace writes to Sir Joseph Wil-

* Of money. To that respectable trade he joined coining and counterfeiting bank notes.

liamson you will please to treat him with my Lord and Excellency, it being the style of Extraordinary Ambassadors. The superscription will be, "To his Excellency Sir Joseph Williamson, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary," &c. My Lord Villiers will not take the same notice of the omission, your Grace continuing to write to him as you did formerly.

I am very glad your Grace feels no more of your pain, so that I hope it has not altered anything as to the time of your coming up, which my Lord Chamberlain seems earnestly to desire, and he scarce ever sees me that he does not mention it.

You may be pretty well assured of seeing my Lord Chancellor at the Board; he sees company at almost all hours, and I don't doubt but he will be abroad next week. My Lord Portland writ to him by last post, and I expected an answer would have been returned yesterday, but none came hither. It is certain my Lord Portland will be thought in the wrong by all who do not flatter him, for making such an unreasonable opposition to my Lord Chancellor's grant. When first I heard him speak of it at Margate, I was surprised to see one so blinded with his own interest, and consider nothing else, especially having obtained so many grants, and some of them still depending. I hope he will take more notice of what others shall say to him on this subject, or otherwise I can't but think that as much as he pre-

fers his own interest, he don't know how to manage it with necessary caution.

What I saw of the King's letter to my Lord Chamberlain was about Mr. Jekyll's grant.

I acquainted my Lord Orford with what your Grace writes of the suspicion some of the clerks of the Admiralty were under; he said he would send me a list of their names this evening, and smilingly added, the two secretaries should be at the head of them; by which I understood what opinion he has of one of them at least.*

Aaron Smith was with me yesterday; he tells me he has been out of town, but he had some accounts at home to send me from the person he employed among the Jacobites, but I have them not yet.

Bobin has sent me his friend's letter; I can't find by it it is what he gave us reason to expect. I laid it before the Lords on Thursday, who, seeing it was long, and understanding there was nothing in it that required immediate attention, they deferred it till yesterday. They saw no secret in it, but thought it easy to imagine the French King would have these and more designs when a peace should be concluded. However, my Lord Chamberlain thought an intelligencer so full of reasoning, and applying himself to our affairs in particular, might deserve the encou-

* Every sort of corruption had undoubtedly been practised, and the consequences had been most disastrous to our naval power.

ragement; he proposes of 100*l.* per annum, and none of the Lords dissented.

My Lord Romney has a remembrance that this man hit upon something while he was secretary, and would be willing to see him in pay again. And indeed the letters laid before them from Paris, though they cost more, do not shew a much better correspondence. He that was at Brest, and died in the cause, was valuable, and made an atonement for the rest. Your Grace will therefore consider what directions you will give in this matter. I asked their Excellencies whether they thought this letter ought to be rewarded with the other fifty guineas that were bargained for, but had no answer to it. I must therefore shew it to my Lord Chancellor, and see what he says to it, and I shall ask Bobin whether this be the secret and important advice he promised.

I thought Sir Harry Colt would now for some time attend every meeting of the Lords, but we heard nothing of him yesterday.

Goudet petitioned the Lords yesterday, and De Cass, who married Algernon Sydney's daughter, was a solicitor to my Lord Romney in his behalf. The Lords have ordered him to be bailed, and that is agreeable to Mr. Attorney's opinion. I'll take his recognizance as soon as Mr. Baker is satisfied about those proposed for his security; he makes objections to some of them. Perhaps according to antient practice, till he is made to understand better.

I am apt to believe the whole will end in distri-

buting money to messengers and prosecutors, and Renew will be frightened to let it go off easily, and so this grand secret will vanish. I shall not be their hindrance, but that they may manage it as they please, only I will make my own observations of it; the papers are still kept to see what evidence can be gathered out of them.

The Lords had the victuallers with them yesterday; they did not agree to Sir George Rooke's account that there was but a month's provision in the fleet. And yet what there was more they could not tell, but this they declared, that without more money they could not make a further supply, and therefore were applying to the Treasury for that purpose.

In answer to the memorial of the Admiralty, and the other paper I sent last post, the Lords have acquainted them that they approve of the fleet's proceeding to sea, pursuant to the opinion of the flag officers; and taking notice of the shortness of provisions, they direct that orders be given for a further supply to be timely provided, as also that they would consider what provisions will be necessary towards the end of the year, and that care be taken they be in readiness as there shall be occasion. Their Excellencies likewise required an account what was done upon the directions sent about fitting out the Mediterranean squadron.

The Earl of Peterborough died this morning. I hope his heir* will have something to amuse him-

* Lord Monmouth.

self honestly about. I hear my Lord Chamberlain dined with him this day.

Mr. Palmer was with me to-day, and says he shall make an end of his business on Monday, and expects the Treasury will attend the Lords Justices on Tuesday, to let them know all demands are satisfied.

The three battalions are not yet ordered to embark, for want of a convoy. The Admiralty can't make it strong enough till the return of the ships they have sent to Hamburgh, and it is not fit to run a risque now De Bart is out; but where he is, or what intends, I know not. Sir Gorge Rooke writes to me a letter of the 17th that he was going to sea with near forty sail and about a month's provisions, and desires to know what will become of them when those are spent.

We hear nothing of the Virginia fleet.

There are letters from Colonel Codrington of the 3d of May, which say Admiral Neville was then at Antigua, and would sail in twelve hours to look after Pointis; but they make no mention where he was.*

We had letters from Ireland yesterday of the 12th. They only tell us it had been declared the day before in council that the Parliament should be

* He could never come up with the French so as to bring them to action, but a part of the fleet under his command burned the settlement of Petit Guavas, and he destroyed four buccaneer vessels which had aided Pointis in the attack upon Carthagena.

adjourned to the 27th, and notice would be given by proclamation of their sitting at that time for the despatch of business.

Mr. Colinge has left a very inconsiderable estate, so that he had the reputation of griping, little to the advantage of his heirs. I don't hear that he has more than 120*l.* per annum, in two leases from my Lord Craven, and he was so far from having money, that he died 500*l.* in debt, which his plate and furniture will hardly discharge.

I presented my son to my Lord Chamberlain yesterday morning, and he writ last night to my Lord Portland in his behalf, and will do the same to the King the first opportunity; so I hope that may succeed. It was well that I took it in time, for at noon the Archbishop of Canterbury pressed him to write for his secretary, Mr. Fairfax's son, but he told him the King had already promised it to me, upon which the Archbishop desisted.

I have now taken Mr. Gondet's recognisance of 6,000*l.* for himself, and four sureties, that he shall appear the first day of next term. Mr. Baker did not think it fit I should examine him now, his papers not being yet looked over. They have found in his books an entry of the letter that related to the passport.

Mr. Harrison calling at the office yesterday, I gave him eight guineas, which he says is but your Grace's proportion at two guineas a share. He don't believe the story of King's; he believes he

could not arrive time enough at the Red Sea to have this report true. He rather thinks that some who have heard of his coming to sea in a ship of force took up an imagination what his design might be.

I hear Mr. Duncombe is very assistant to Mr. Palmer in bringing him out of his difficulty. If so, I conclude he thinks the Treasury and Mr. Palmer sufficiently at variance, and he will range himself on this side.

The Dutch mail is not yet arrived.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

22nd of June, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 19th, and am infinitely obliged to your Grace that you have it in your thoughts to accomplish my desires for my son. But I hope there will not be occasion to give you any trouble in it at this time. I acquainted you by last post, that my Lord Chamberlain had writ to my Lord Portland, and I don't know but he may mention it in his letter this night to the King, since he said he would do it. I hope the King was a little disposed to it before, so that I expect it may succeed now there is no *president* * to interpose.

* At this time the Duke of Leeds, Lord President, was in disgrace.

I am glad your Grace begins to fix on a time when you will be coming nearer. My Lord Chancellor intends to be with the Lords Justices on Tuesday next: in the meantime, his doctor advises him to take as much of the air as he can, and accordingly he went out of town last night, and would have done it sooner if the weather had not been so cold. I saw him yesterday morning, and thought he was very hearty, but he looks a little pale and wan. I went to shew him a copy of what the Lords Justices of Ireland have prepared for their speech, which is here enclosed, with the Lords Justices' letter, pointing at the parts they desire may be considered, and my Lord Chancellor thinks they may well deserve it. I find he neither likes the language nor the contexture of the speech, and there are some parts of it not to be admitted: as the reason given why they are continued by adjournment, the saying so much about the militia, and as it were undertaking the King will allow of all bills they shall think fit to propose, and to make the building of barracks part of a demand at the opening of a session.

The Chancellor Methuen, who I perceive is the penner of it, in his postcript of his letter to me writes, that if it be not considered the speech is calculated for Ireland, he looks upon himself as undone.

I told my Lord Chancellor I hoped their Excellencies would not consider it till they had him among them; and when it was read to-day, my Lord Cham-

berlain proposed the deferring the consideration of it till next week, and there would be yet time enough to send their thoughts upon it into Ireland.

Upon my Lord Chancellor's coming abroad, my Lord Chamberlain designs going to Althorpe the Friday following, and will return in eight days; and the Monday after his return, my Lord Orford hopes to go to Chippenham for ten days.

We had two Dutch mails yesterday: the motions of both armies nearer to Brussels are in Mr. Yard's printed paper, so there is no need of sending the camp letters.

What they are doing at the Congress your Grace will see by the enclosed account, and by Sir Joseph Williamson's letter. Mr. Prior writes that our plenipotentiaries were by order drawing up our project of peace to be laid before the King. He was afraid they should have too much time to mend and alter them.

I have enclosed likewise King James's protestation against the peace. We are glad to see it, as the only sign that any such thing is intended; and yet that may be an amusement as well as the rest. Mr. Johnson coming to me, I sent him to copy it for the Bishop of Salisbury, and he will send it him this night. This is a good opportunity to give a freshness to what has been so long prepared for the press.

My Lord Pembroke writes that the pensioner of Holland had lately an account in relation to the person who about seven or eight months ago was

clapped up at Rotterdam upon an information that he was going over into England to murder the King, that the person who gave that information was lately assassinated at Haerlem, being stabbed in three places, but he was not then dead. The man who stabbed him fled, and left him with a letter, importing he should make no more informations.

The directions Mr. Blathwayte sends me are only about the Dunkirk squadron, transmitting a copy of the orders given to Rear Admiral Vandergoes, that he with four ships from the Maes, six from Amsterdam, and those that should come to him from Zealand, should go before Dunkirk and concert matters with the commander of the English squadron. That they should divide themselves, partly below and partly above Dunkirk, to hinder de Bart's coming out through either channel, and at spring tides one of them should leave their post, to take care he don't come over the breach or sand that lies at the mouth of the harbour, and so escape them. But if, notwithstanding all their care, he gets to sea, they are to follow and fight him. If he go into any of the ports northward, they are to go in after him, forbearing hostilities there, but not to suffer him to go to sea without their being at his heels.

Their Excellencies have sent a copy of these orders to the Admiralty, and directed them to give their order conformably, and because the service would admit of no delay, if any of the ships they designed for this squadron were not at hand or in a readiness

to go, their places should be supplied with other ships of the like force. This was proposed to my Lord Orford, so I suppose he knew his reason for it.

After all the reports the Admiralty have had of de Bart's being out, we see no confirmation of it, nor do we know where this Vandergoes is. My Lord Orford thinks he is gone to the northward. Captain Beaumont, who is to command the Dunkirk squadron, is hourly expected from Hamburgh, the wind having been some days fair to bring him. As soon as he arrives, the three battalions will embark, and be sent under his convoy.

Mr. Blathwayte has at last sent Mr. Baber's warrant, and it is signed. As he went from hence he has suffered himself to be convinced that nothing extraordinary was intended to be imposed; but few men will ever own themselves in the wrong. He still maintains, that upon his own knowledge the Treasury and Admiralty appointed officers for executing many employments that are mentioned in Mr. Harris's patent. If they did so they will do it again, and I suppose Mr. Baber will acquiesce as Mr. Harris did.

In the meantime he has received your Grace's kindness entire; he has his warrant, and my Lady Sunderland has notice of it, who is so much the more pleased with it, as it is not curtailed by Mr. Blathwayte's gainsaying. She dropped a word, as if she could wish your Grace thought their house in the square for your turn, the rent would not

exceed 25*l.* per annum,* which I think is the same you paid before for a much worse house. But it is not like to be immediately empty; they would remove into the Cockpit as soon as my Lord Dorset leaves it, and he promised to dislodge by Midsummer: we are very near that time, and he has done nothing towards it.

There was an express yesterday from Commissioner St. Lo, who brought an account that the Virginia fleet were passed by Plymouth under the convoy of Rear-Admiral Benbow, who had the good fortune to stay long enough to bring them with him, and none of them, that I hear of, are missing. The wind has hardly served to bring them on, so perhaps they may be now at Torbay. There were several packets sent up at the same time, directed to your Grace, which all came from Sir Edmund Andros and his Council, or the Assembly at Virginia. I have sent them therefore to Mr. Popple, for the perusal of the Commissioners of Trade.

Vice-Admiral Mitchell sailed on Saturday last, with eight men-of-war and a fire-ship, from Spithead, to cruise to the westward. Now the Virginia fleet is come in, they say we have no considerable trade abroad, except the East India ships, and I don't hear when they are expected. We have no advice that Sir George Rook is yet put to sea. The Lords Justices have no account from the Admiralty, neither

* This seems a most extraordinary rent even for those times, but I leave it as I find it written.

to their enquiries how the fleet was to be employed, nor to what is done about fitting out the Mediterranean squadron. If your Grace and my Lord Chancellor were here, transactions with them would be a little more regular.

My Lord Montgomery was bailed on Saturday by the King's Bench,* I did not hear it time enough to mention it then. The Lords Justices upon his petition spoke to the Attorney-General about it, but gave him no directions, understanding that the King when he was here would have given no consent to his being bailed. He now alledged the unhealthiness of the prison, and it was thought the sessions would have bailed him of course where his indictment was depending. His bail were the Duke of Norfolk, Earl of Yarmouth, Lord Carrington, and Lord Jeffries, bound in 5,000*l.* each.

Mr. Palmer has yet 10,000*l.* to raise to clear all demands; 3,000*l.* thereof is due to Mr. Duncombe, who in all probability will be easy to him, and has contributed to make others so, for we hear no more of pressing hard upon him.

I hear Monsieur d'Allonne has advice that the King is to have a great supply of money from Holland, and that Amsterdam will furnish him with five millions of gilders, on the credit of our parliamentary funds, at five per cent. I wish it were true on many

* We have heard of his arrest; and it would seem that William bore some personal animosity to him, as Lord Aylesbury had been set free some time.

accounts. I suppose they would not think the peace desperate when they were so free with their money.

My Lord Chancellor came this day to Westminster and took the oaths.

The Prince and Princess are gone this day for Tunbridge.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 24th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 21st. Since you are pleased to concern yourself in my behalf, I must be very unfortunate if I miscarry.

I am enough precautioned not to let Mr. Chaloner fix himself upon me, he is very well matched already. One * has a fruitful invention, and the other † is easy of belief, and will blindly vent whatever they would have him.

Monsieur Bobin has been with me, and by what I can understand from him, this is all the secret one is to have for the remaining fifty guineas. I think he and his friend are not far asunder, for he talks as enigmatically as he says his friend writes. He says it has been his manner to see far things at a distance, and that my Lord Romney and Sir John Trenchard were very well satisfied with him. That is a good way to put off his own imaginations, and

* Chaloner. † Sir Harry Colt.

one time or another they may prove true. I desired he would bring his intelligence to some present facts, which might be of immediate use. I suppose the Scotch secretaries left him off, for being only a speculative writer, and knowing nothing that was reducible to practice. However I have encouraged him to send for the eschantillons of the letters he offers; and according as they are approved of, the terms will be complied with, and one quarterly payment advanced. I suppose it will then be time enough to clear the other score. This business of intelligence is hitherto better paid than performed. Monsieur Cacllaud, by whom Monsieur Jurieu works, has good intentions, but he is blown upon, and therefore not very fit to continue it. Yet I don't see your Grace can alter the method neither till the King first takes notice how useless it is.

I don't know whether Sir George Rooke be at sea, but he sailed to St. Helen's two days ago. He writes very melancholy accounts to the Admiralty, and Sir Cloudesley Shovel speaks yet plainer, not only of the small quantity of their provisions, but the quality too is not very good, especially of the bread, and the want of pease and oatmeal is so visible, that already the scurvy exceedingly increases in the fleet to a high degree. The Admiralty have put all into a long memorial, which being ordered to be transcribed for the Treasury, I can't get another copy of it. Without a large supply of money, the victuallers declare

* So written.

they can go no further. The Admiralty insinuate as if the method likewise ought to be altered. I know not whether they mean by it that the Navy Board should have the direction of the Victualling too; but if some good and speedy course be not taken, the fleet is like to fall into disorder.

Sir George knows not how to advise their going to sea, when they must return again in a fortnight for want of provisions. There has been a kind of mutiny on board the Royal Oak, for want of their short allowance and bounty money; it is appeased again, but they know not how soon it may break out if suitable remedies be not applied. The Treasury were writ to some days ago about the short allowance money, and now this memorial is sent them that they should apply themselves to the discharge of what is incumbent on them towards providing for the fleet, and their Excellencies will speak with them on Friday, to know what progress they have made in it. My Lord Chancellor will then be at the board; and it is to be wished it may now be full, for the want of money and credit is like to break out into so many inconveniences, that all considerations ought to be employed how the public service shall be carried on.

Bobin's advertisement about the disguised engineers that are gone for Jamaica is sent to Mr. Popple, who tells me the Commissioners of Trade will not only give notice of it to the governor of Jamaica, but at Barbadoes and other places.

My Lord Chamberlain came this evening to the

office, and told me he was going to Althorpe for ten days. I thought it strange he would go out of town at least till Tuesday was over, but he said my Lord Chancellor would be here then, and the Treasury would take all the care that was possible.

I hear that Brown was discharged yesterday at the King's Bench. It was apprehended he would not have appeared, but he has been better managed. I hope, therefore, the same care will send him for Ireland.

The Earl of Bath has brought an information for subornation and perjury against my Lord Montague's chaplain and solicitor. It is pretended that the lord of the manor from whence these goodly witnesses came was promised 2,000*l.* upon the success of the cause.

Mr. Gray's commission was brought this evening to council for his being governor of Barbadoes, and approved of.

Mr. Pyrke appeared in custody to the complaint of Mr. Smith. He is left to the law for abusing the alderman of Gloucester, and for his affronting Mr. Smith, and countenancing clippers; the consideration thereof, and how he shall be proceeded against, is put off to this day three weeks.

The Lords of the Admiralty go to Deptford tomorrow, to be at the launching of an eighty-gun ship, which is to be called the Ranelagh.

The subscriptions of tallies are to be concluded this night; they amount to about a million.

My Lord Chancellor was in the Chancery court for about two hours on Tuesday; he went that night to Mortlake, and will stay there till Monday next.

Mr. Palmer has brought his business near to a conclusion: Mr. Montague tells me he is within three or four thousand pounds of adjusting all accounts.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 26th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 23d, and the advantage of that for my Lord Portland, which cannot fail of its effects, for either it will prevail to establish a young man, and settle my thoughts about the manner of his education, or at least, I shall have the satisfaction that your Grace has been pleased to own and support me upon so particular an occasion, which I should lessen my sense of, if I went about expressing my thanks.

As to Major-General Trelawny's business,* I acquainted your Grace that my Lord Chamberlain desired it should be mentioned only when my Lord Chancellor was present. I know not whether I shall do it on Tuesday, now my Lord Chamberlain is out

* He had been put in command of the Plymouth militia, which greatly offended the magistrates of that town, and it was supposed that they would resign in a body, and do every thing to oppose the government unless the appointment was rescinded.

of town; if his solicitors give me leave, I would rather stay a week longer, till all the Lords are there; and I presume my Lord Chancellor would rather have it so, considering that he is importuned to be of an opinion different from some others in this matter.

Mr. Povey is very much obliged to your Grace for writing in his behalf. I think his pretensions are the most equitable, as having been sworn in extraordinary some time before Mr. Southwell. I thought the only handle for a dispute could have been in the manner Mr. Povey was admitted; whether it were on any other account than barely to qualify him to officiate for Mr. Blathwayte in the plantation business during his attendance on the King, which I believe was the pretence made use of when he was sworn, I can't say, but he answers pertinently that this can be no objection, since he continues waiting in the council, though he has no longer any relation to the plantation office. But Mr. Southwell, or rather his father in his behalf, urges what I think the second in reversion should not do, which is, that the King is under no obligation to take them in their order, or to bring any of them into the vacancies, but may make those clerks who never were there; precedents perhaps run both ways, and nobody would question the King's power, but one may give an opinion what seems most agreeable to the ordinary methods of his equity and justice. I don't doubt but Mr. Southwell will alter

his notions when he comes to be first on the list, and then be a champion for succession, which I hope nobody will oppose, he being a deserving young gentleman; but in the meantime, I believe Mr. Blathwayte knows he is beforehand with him, and therefore has sent him word he cannot serve him on this occasion.

I have told your Grace what I had done as to Bobin. Perhaps I may have been a little too hasty, but I don't see how it can be altered now my Lord Chamberlain delivered his opinion that 100*l.* per annum should be given for these letters; and I gave myself all the scope I could to have them first sent upon trial, it being their own proposal, and when any of those come, it may be a proper occasion to move the Lords again about the remaining fifty guineas, which the gentleman has hardly assurance enough to press for. He knows I am not ignorant that he broke bulk, and supplied his necessities out of the last sum as soon as he had it, though it were put into his hands only as a deposit, to be given or not, as the secret advice should be thought worth it. My opinion is that nobody was to have it but himself; I don't expect the advices he will give should come from far. There is a club of Novelists of them here at hand, and this is to be compiler of all their notions and reasonings, and pawn them upon us as the sentiments of both courts in France.

We had a Dutch mail yesterday. I send your

Grace a copy of Mr. Blathwayte's letter, for the sake of a formal answer he is directed to make to a memorial from the Admiralty about Captain Ripley. I send a copy of the memorial likewise, that you may see what occasion has been given for this reply. Mr. Blathwayte, in his other letter to me, expresses himself thus, viz.—"When you particularly consider that Captain Ripley and Captain Price are the only commanders with their vessels his Majesty has reserved for his own discretion and use of the land forces, you will easily judge his Majesty could not receive so severe a reprimand from the Lords of the Admiralty without some resentment." Mr. Blathwayte is a cautious writer, and very sparing of harsh expressions; since, therefore, he uses such as these, I am afraid the behaviour of the Admiralty is extreme ill taken, and that they have impudently asserted this authority. This is not the first time they have been turning out captains, and the King has restored them. It was once Captain Price's case. I am sorry if my Lord Orford should be carried too far with a petulancy that is in some of their tempers. As to my own particular, I have not liked the way they are falling into of late of coming out with a memorial upon all occasions. Sure some of them fancy they have a notable knack this way, and one sees what it produces. I hope the Lords Justices will hereafter desire to see them oftener, as they used to do, and then this paper fencing may in a good measure be laid aside.

The Lords ordered a copy of Mr. Blathwayte's letter to be sent them, with directions that Captain Ripley have a hearing ordered, either before themselves, or such as they should appoint. They have already sent me an answer to it, which comes this day from Mr. Burchet in these words:—"That their Lordships had appointed a time for hearing the whole matter themselves, and when they have done it, will transmit an account thereof to their Excellencies for his Majesty's consideration."

But their Lordships command him to take notice to me, that before Captain Ripley was dismissed, they ordered Sir George Rooke to examine into the fact, who, acquainting them that Captain Ripley did not deny his disposing of the King's provisions, their Lordships, when Sir George Rooke was present at the Board, thought it necessary to displace him, which was before his Majesty's commands in Mr. Blathwayte's first letter were received, and another commander put in, as is mentioned in their Lordship's memorial to their Excellencies, a copy whereof is enclosed, though Mr. Blathwayte in his last letter takes no notice of either of these particulars.

I transcribe this at large, that your Grace may see what we are running into, and how necessary it is that some persons of prudence and authority should interpose to bring down this stomachfull of humour, which the King will think aimed at him, however it be pretended that Mr. Blathwayte has made the oversight, and did not comprehend the

force of their memorial. I am glad for this account your Grace is coming up. I don't know anybody else can qualify this obstinacy, and dispose them not to be so high upon these points of grandeur, to the prejudice of themselves and the public.

If my Lord Orford will please to moderate, there is no fear but the rest will abate of their prerogative. I can't omit the laying all the papers they send me before the Lords Justices; but I hope they will not be in haste to send this to Flanders, but rather expect the issue of Captain Ripley's hearing, or otherwise it would be throwing oil upon a fire which it is high time to think of quenching.

Another reason of sending Mr. Blathwayte's letter is to satisfy your Grace what induced me to open my Lord Villiers' letter, which I should not otherwise have done now I know his superscription, and that what he writes is to yourself only in particular. But Mr. Blathwayte mentioning that he has directions to send hither what might concern the Dunkirk squadron, and I could not tell whether it were not now come. But I have taken care that no creature knows one word either of the letter or project.*

Mr. Hill has not writ by this post, and I have nothing to add but the Ryswick paper.

My Lord Chamberlain went for Althorpe yesterday, after dinner. He lay last night at Dunstable.

* The project was for a peace between England and France, and inclosed in a letter from Lord Villiers, dated July 2, N.S., or June 22, O.S.

I suppose he was to take up my Lord Godolphin at St. Alban's.

The Admiralty were yesterday at the launching of the Ranelagh. It had like to have killed Mr. Harding the master-builder, one very eminent in his profession; one of the props, as they were hewing them down, fell on his head; after being blooded he came a little to himself. I know not how he will come off, but it is hoped his skull is not broke.

Captain Price, commander of the Centurion, had like to have been drowned on Thursday night at London-bridge. He is newly returned from Holland, and coming up at midnight in his pinnace, with some of his passengers and about 12,000*l.* belonging to Alderman Johnson and others, by the mistake of his cockswain the boat was upset and broke at the bridge. There were eighteen men in her, whereof six are drowned; one of these is Mr. Morris, only son of a gentleman of a good estate near Canterbury, who went over with Sir Joseph Williamson to see a little of the congress.

Mr. Hunt, a Worcestershire gentleman, was with me this evening, and brought me the petition of the High Sheriff and other gentlemen, in favour of Edward Dance. I shall present it to the Lords on Tuesday. I wish they would despatch it without sending to the King for the bill, for that circuit pardon is now lying at the office. I told Mr. Hunt he would have done well to have brought it sooner,

and it would be necessary to have Judge Eyre's report, since the petition mentions it. To the first, he says the petition was sent to him but yesterday; as to the last, he went to the other office for the report, but they can't yet find it.

The Lords of the Treasury were with their Excellencies yesterday: it was resolved the victuallers should have 10,000*l.* given them immediately, in Exchequer bills, that they might not lose the Monday's market. But what they supplied them with must be taken from other services. On Tuesday they come again to discourse this matter farther.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

June 29th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 26th. I am glad to find a day named when we may hope to see you here, which I shall give my Lord Chamberlain notice of, he having enjoined it when he went out of town.

I have enquired, as far as I can, about Mr. Tancred, but can find no certainty whether he be dead or alive: people take it upon trust that he is dead, because it has been so long reported. If the Duke of Leeds were in town, they say there are some in his family from whom one might know the truth of it; but he is ill himself, so that his servants don't stir from him. However, I have prepared the war-

rants for Sir Charles Shuckborough (whom all the town has talked of for that place), but I am a little to seek how it is to be done, there having been some alteration made after Mr. Tancred passed his patent. The entries of both are in my Lord Nottingham's books, so they are to pass by your Grace. The first warrant is directed to the Attorney-General, and is for passing a patent for the office with the fee of 500*l.* per annum, with all perquisites, advantages, and profits, as any of his predecessors enjoyed it. The next warrant bearing date, is to the treasurer of the chamber to pay him 300*l.* per year in lieu of all perquisites, which are thereby discharged, and the whole is converted into a salary of 800*l.* per annum, payable in two places.

I suppose this arose upon the reducing horse, liveries, and other allowances in the cofferer's office. I believe the safest way will be to stick to this precedent, and not to put the 800*l.* into the patent, and therefore I shall send Mr. Blathwayte the warrants distinct for the 500*l.* and 300*l.*, the date of the letter to be left in blank, to be filled up after the patent is passed. I shall conclude as others do, that the place is vacant, and not delay sending the warrants.

Mr. Penn is gone to Bristol, but he said something to me of the letters he desires in his behalf. Your Grace remembers he was very earnest last winter to get a *nolle prosequi* on his indictment in Ireland. Mr. Attorney General had told me my

Lord Chief Justice disapproved of *nolle prosequis* on indictment of treason, but the Attorney himself did not think them altogether so exceptionable. Mr. Penn told me he had spoken with the Attorney again, who was of opinion a *nolle prosequi* might be granted, especially in a case where a man is indicted for a treason committed at a time prefixed, when it is notorious he was not then in Ireland, nor for many years before, nor ever since. I told him if he would state his case, and demand, in a petition or memorial, that might be sent to the Attorney General, and he reported this opinion, the business would be done without any more hesitancy.

I know not whether he found any obstacle, but instead of bringing a memorial, he tells me my Lord Chamberlain had put him into a shorter way upon his acquainting him that Mr. Savage had said there was already an order of *cesset processus* upon this and other indictments, wherefore his Lordship thought there was no fear of his being molested if he went over and offered his letters to the Justices and Chancellor, and he had a mind to strengthen them with your Grace's, which, in compliment, he said he could most depend upon, and he added that he had another design, which was, when the matters were prepared for it, and the persons concerned well disposed, he would be brought upon trial, and discharge his indictment that way.

If your Grace thinks of writing, it will be time enough when you come to town, for he intended

some stay at Bristol. In the meantime, I'll let him know your readiness to gratify him, and desire to be more particularly informed to what effect my Lord Chamberlain will write, that your Grace will agree with him in it.

I have not heard more of the loan the King was to have from Amsterdam. They say the account of it came from Brienne, whom one would think a good author.

The Dutch post is not yet arrived. My Lord Chancellor was with the Lords Justices this day. It was pretty hard service for the first time, the meeting lasting from eleven to three, which has not happened before. The Lords of the Treasury were with them, and proposed the supplying the victuallers with 20,000*l.* more in exchequer bills, if their Excellencies would allow the taking it from the head of wages, which they hoped to make good before that payment was called for. My Lord Orford owned the supplying the victuallers was the most pressing service, so there was no difficulty that every thing should give way to it. The Treasury likewise acquainted the Lords that they had provided for the bounty money and short allowance, those being both of them clamorous demands, but withal they desired it might be considered how far the money would reach which they are able to furnish, and that the less necessary services might not be insisted on, lest more be required of them than they can possibly comply with. All which is communicated to Mr.

Blathwayte, and it will be well if it can procure a dispensing with the Mediterranean service, which is aimed at, though it be not expressed.

The three battalions are ordered to embark on Thursday next, and are to be convoyed by those ships the Admiralty have added to the Centurion and Royal Transport.

Advice is at last come of Captain Beaumont's arrival in the Downs. I suppose the Admiralty have sent him their orders conformable to those given to Rear Admiral Vandergoes.

Captain Ripley is to have a hearing this evening before the Lords of the Admiralty. The Marquis of Carmarthen came this day and presented his petition, by which he would have declined that judicature, and desired he might be tried by a court martial: he urged it as belonging to them of right, and what was agreeable to two acts of parliament. But he acquiesced when it was read to him in what manner the King had directed it, only he said he understood it otherwise from Flanders. I suppose he meant my Lord Cutts.

My Lord Orford can't conceal his uneasiness at Mr. Blathwayte's last letter, and the support given to this captain to the lessening their authority. He let fall words, as if nobody could serve at that rate; he is in a great disposition again to lay down till his friends shall bring him out of it. He talks of going into the country on Tuesday next. I wish your Grace could speak with him before he went. A soft answer turneth away wrath.

I proposed the Irish speech to be considered, but it is put off till Thursday next, and then Mr. Attorney is to attend to give an account of the Irish bills, that it may be resolved which of them shall be despatched.

A good deal of time was taken up with examining into a matter that would scarce have been thought worth while, but for the noise it is like to make. A barber going about twelve days since to the Tower, he saw one sitting within a window at old Rotier's house, whom he fancied to be like King James. He happened to speak of it some days after to his landlord, who mentioned it to Whiston the broker, and he carried it round the town. He brought the man to make oath of it before my Lord Chief Justice, and on Saturday my Lord Lucas made a search into the Tower, but nothing was found. However, for form's sake, the matter was examined over again, and all parties heard. I suppose the conclusion will be to dislodge old Rotier from the Tower, as having now nothing more to do there.

Captain Robertson, one who has plied my Lord Romney with informations, particularly about papists creeping into the army; he came this day with a full charge against most of the regiments, particularly against Colonel Coote, that he had four hundred Irish papists in his regiment, some of his captains, Dudley Loftus had twenty-six in his company. The Lords can scarce believe a man that would prove too much; however, they have sent to speak with the colonel on Thursday next.

The regiments will now begin to be marching towards the camp.

Sir George Rooke passed by Plymouth on the 25th, with twenty-five English men-of-war and sixteen Dutch; he is gone to his station, eight leagues N.W. of Ushant.

The commissioners for the exchange of prisoners have a scurvy piece of news, by one of their transports which came from Dunkirk on Saturday last. The commissary there told them that three East India Company's ships, outward bound, were brought into Port Louis. If this be true, it is like to be our ships, we having that number which Benbow carried out with him, and was to see them part of their way.

I mentioned Major-General Trelany's business this day, but my Lord Chancellor was for having it considered at a full board, so it must stay for your Grace and my Lord Chamberlain's coming up.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

July 1st, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 28th past, and wish there could be any way found to have better intelligencers at home and abroad. Among other advantages, one would be, that one might with greater freedom throw off some bold intruders, into what they are no way fit for.

I send your Grace a piece of each kind. One is a letter which Monsieur Bobin sent me this morning, which the Lords Justices have not yet seen, the other is an affidavit of Robertson, who throws his suspicions upon the whole army. Colonel Coote was sent for to-day upon this information. It was not shewn him, but some questions were asked which he seemed surprised at, and thought there was so little ground for laying the charge upon his regiment that he desired it might be brought to the proof, which is intended, and a discovery will be made one way or another, either that the Colonel is mistaken or the informer not to be credited, the latter whereof is most to be wished for. This fellow was turned over to Captain Baker, to subsist him till he made out his information; but he has taken advantage of his being out of town for two or three days, and has extorted three guineas from me, upon pretence of his being arrested, to the great prejudice of the King's business, and by that means the twelve stewards would escape. I think the thirteenth has the worst of it, if he be obliged to supply him.

Mr. Palmer, I believe, has paid in all his money, or very near it: the Treasury intend to let the King know it to-morrow's post.

My Lord Montague's chaplain, who is informed against for subornation, is one Lambert. Stone tells me he is not his domestic now; but he has lately married the rich widow of a planter. The lord of the manor's name is Kedge, a kind of a weak lawyer.

He was one of the witnesses of Coppleston's being in the country, and was indicted for it; it seems he was either full of remorse or had compounded the matter, for he intended to plead guilty, and there was no small contrivance to prevail with him to sign a warrant of attorney to authorise one to plead for him, which they say is necessary in these cases.

And this, Mr. Sloen says, is the charge against Mr. Lambert and the solicitor, that they overruled him by their insinuations and promises of a great match; and that the 2,000*l.* was what they undertook my Lord Montague should lend upon his manor, which lies in the neighbourhood of the rest of the witnesses.

My Lord Normanby is removed to Queen-street, and your Grace's letter has been carried to him, as also that to my Lord Orford, who intends to stay till Wednesday, in hopes to see your Grace.

We have a Dutch post yesterday. I send what I have from Sir Joseph Williamson, Ryswick, and Mr. Hill.

Mr. Blathwayte's letter being long and full of enquiries and directions, I send a copy of it, as not expecting to make myself understood if I should pretend to give any other account of it. I wish this coming upon the pensioner's arrival be not an indication that there is no great reliance on the peace.

What relates to sea affairs is ordered to be sent to the Admiralty, except the latter part of the paragraph about the Dunkirk squadron, which their

Excellencies find to differ from the orders given to Rear Admiral Vandergoes, who is directed to commit no hostilities in the Northern ports. This, therefore, is submitted again to his Majesty, that if no regard is to be had to the Northern ports, the orders may be given alike to both commanders, and there will be no loss of time if they be sent directly to them by the way of Nienport, for Beaumont is taking in his provisions, and will soon be going towards Dunkirk. The question is whether he is so well stored as to undertake a long voyage. The Admiralty, however, are writ to, to take care in it.

It is very easy to foresee what the Admiralty will answer to the other paragraph, that much will depend on the victuallers, and they will turn it off to the Treasury, who plead inability already. If there be no moderating of demands, I suppose the conclusion will be that the Lords must write themselves to the King, and make it understood how the case is with us.

I believe your Grace will be surprised to see in what manner Mr. Blathwayte writes about Nelson, and his undertaking with Callieres to procure a neutrality for America, and you will not be less, when you hear the council have this evening ordered his commitment, and that his lodgings be immediately searched. He was attending to get La Forest discharged upon his bond being delivered up, which he brought with him from Holland. If he be not a spy and a creature of the French, he carries at least

unlucky marks of it: he owned to the council his having been with Callieres without leave, and for that they committed him. He spoke with my Lord Villiers at the Hague, and told him his story, who thought it so extravagant, that instead of granting him a pass as he desired, he gave Mr. Secretary notice of him, that he might be seized at Harwich.

The Irish speech is not yet considered. I wish they would do it to-morrow. Mr. Attorney attended and gave an account of the bills. Some that are least exceptionable will be put into a way of despatch, and the council meets for that purpose on Tuesday next; but there will be no haste in sending away the *Habeas Corpus* bill.

One may see my Lord Chancellor is not so well able to bear his long sittings both in his own court and at Whitehall.

The Paris letters confirm the taking of our East India ships; they write only of two yet, the Bedford and Dorothy. We may expect to hear of the third, the Tavistock, but if she have escaped it is the richest ship.

Benbow carried them one hundred and twenty leagues from Scilly. Some say they were dogged by the ships that took them: I hear no certainty of it, but if it were so, they were to blame for leaving their convoy.

The three battalions embarked this day.

The hearing between my Lord Steward and Lord Normanby is ordered for Wednesday next.

The petition in behalf of Dance has been laid before the Lords Justices.

My Lord Chancellor thought fit that Mr. Justice Eyre should be writ to for his report, since they have not found it in the other office. The Judge has sent an abstract of it, but it is not much in his favour. I'll acquaint the Lords with it to-morrow.

Sir Harry Colt has never attended since with his circuit informations.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Whitehall, August 14th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 30th past, and can't but venture this letter's finding you, since it is to acquaint you that the Elector of Saxony is chosen King of Poland,* and his minister at the Hague has notified it to all the congress.

Sir Joseph Williamson writes that he appeared all of a sudden a candidate at the head of eight or nine thousand men, and with a convoy of 600,000*l.* sterling. It is looked upon as a very lucky turn at present, though they know not what alterations it may make in the affairs of the empire hereafter, since his changing his religion will be a great weakening of the Protestant interest there.

* Augustus, Elector of Saxony. His only competitor of importance was the Prince de Conti; but Augustus displayed so much promptitude and vigour in changing his religion and occupying the country, that Conti was forced to return to France disappointed.

The Dutch post came in late this evening, and therefore don't allow much time to enlarge upon this news. The camps in Flanders were still in the same place. The French had passed the Rhine at Fort Louis, with all their horse, and most of their foot, and were advantageously encamped at Radstat. The Prince of Baden was marching towards them, and some considerable action was expected there.

The Pensioner returned to the Hague on Thursday last. It did not appear yet what his journey had produced. The Spaniards had not declared themselves whether they would join with the allies in the late proposal they made to the French. It was thought they stayed only to confer with the Pensioner, and would be governed by his advice. There is nothing new about Barcelona: they have men enough in the town and about it, not to be overrun by twenty-two thousand men, if they will bestir themselves. We don't hear that De Bart is yet out, and it is supposed that Captain Beaumont, who commands the Dunkirk squadron, is sailed this day from the Downs.

Mr. Blathwayte writes that he is commanded to take notice that Mr. Palmer's suspension and prosecution was not conditional in case only he did not discharge the debt, but that it was absolute, for deterring others from the like practice. This comes a little surprisingly. It was but last night the Treasury writ to Mr. Blathwayte to acquaint the King all was paid. He may, indeed notwithstand-

ing, be suspended and turned out, if the King thinks fit, but I don't see what he should be prosecuted for, or that an Exchequer process can lie against a man when he owes nothing.

Mr. Blathwayte likewise sends directions that there should be no want of provisions towards the end of the year, and that seamen be procured to man the fleet up to the highest compliment. It would be well if either of these can be complied with. I am afraid they will hear another story when the Lords Justices come to make their representation, which perhaps may be on Friday next, after the report has been made from the Admiralty, and the Treasury have been talked to upon it.

I believe my Lord Orford intends staying in town till this is over.

Ripley had a hearing before the Admiralty yesterday; they think there are full proofs against him, and intend to draw up a statement of the evidence on both sides, to be sent to the King.

The Lords Justices took into consideration yesterday the speech sent them from Ireland, and have made a good many alterations in it. I have drawn them up into a letter as well as I could understand them; but I dare not venture in so nice a matter to send it over till my Lord Chancellor approves it. I have endeavoured to see him this afternoon, but he was gone out. I left my business sealed up, in hopes to have it again to-night, but I hear no news of it. I am obliged to my Lord Chancellor for the

offer of his assistance, but I knew nobody was to be depended on except your Grace.

I believe Nelson's papers are hardly yet looked through. I saw the letter he writ to Monsieur Callieres, containing his project of a neutrality. He proposes the making of it by the governors of the colonies on each side, thereby to obviate the pretended difficulties on the French owning the King.

There are letters from Sir George Rooke of the 28th past; he was then fifteen leagues north-east of Ushant, and had sent a detachment into Brest water to gain what intelligence they could. He has met with a fleet of above fifty Swedes, Danes, and Dantzicker running from France with their lading of salt, wine, and brandy, under the convoy of a Swedes man-of-war. They were seized by order of the Admiralty, upon an information given to Sir George Rooke while he was in the Downs, by a Danish master of a vessel, who undertakes to prove that some of them carry goods backwards and forwards to Dunkirk, and renew their passes from Sweden while they are abroad, and that some others are freighted on account of Hamburghers and Lubeckers. The Admiralty have sent for the man, and desire the Lords Justices' directions about those ships and their convoy, which can't come under consideration until Tuesday. I wish it may not be a puzzling business, and that the mediator don't make a great noise about it.

I find by Mr. Blathwayte that the King is come to no determination between Mr. Povey and Mr. Southwell about the clerk of the council's place. Mr. Blathwayte shews a great concern for Mr. Povey, and desires me to mention it to the Lords; but I shall serve him most effectually if I defer it till your Grace's arrival, and I believe Mr. Povey will be of that opinion. Till this be decided I can't expect to hear anything of my pretensions for my son. My Lord Portland writes to my Lord Chamberlain, but I know not what it contains. Your Grace's letter was not arrived at the camp when these came away.

A Dutch post arriving this noon, I send your Grace your letters by a messenger, who may bring back the French letters.

Mr. Blathwayte writes to me only concerning Monsieur Bobin's short advice of the 5th, which he says deserves some farther explanation, and if it be possible, he would have it procured from him. Whether the second letter will give him the satisfaction he expects, I know not: if your Grace thinks fit, I'll further acquaint him what Bobin told your Grace concerning his correspondent, and the opinion the King had of him, though unknown; as also that he keeps none of his original letters by him, not so much as this last, but burns them all as soon as he has copied them; or if there be anything else that is still to be added.

An Irish lord came to the office this morning,

and brought the enclosed from my Lord Galway. He had a mind to have carried it to Woborne, but that I thought very unnecessary. He left me two private bills and a letter from the Lords Justices and council of Ireland. One of the bills is for this Lord *Folyot*,* that he may charge his estate with 5,000*l.* as a provision for younger children. The other is of the like kind, for William Jones, to raise money for debts and portions.

Bank stock is already fallen five per cent. upon this day's news.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 19th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 17th. Mr. Arden brought Mr. Jones to me yesterday morning, who shewed me a letter he had received from Brown, dated the 15th, in which he sent him enclosed a copy of a letter he had writ to my Lord Chancellor about a fortnight since, that I suppose your Grace might have seen. In this last he has some menacing ——† that his necessities would put him upon something that he should not otherwise have thought of, and such unintelligible stuff, which Mr. Jones thinks he means nothing by but to frighten somebody or another to furnish him

* So written. † Word undecipherable; probably hints.

with money. However, we thought this was a natural occasion for Mr. Jones to find him out, (his letter directs where), and to make him explain himself why he writes to him in that manner, and to let him understand that the supply he had procured for him before was to enable him to go to some place where he might be safe, since he thought himself in danger here; that he wondered he was not gone, and if he could get anything more for him, it would be upon condition that he should not lead an idle lewd life here, for it was not his intention to supply his extravagancies, and when we heard his answer we would consider what to do next. If there were occasion, Mr. Jones would tell him, perhaps he might get him as much money as would carry him to where he designed to go, and would endeavour to be assisting him afterwards.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 21st, 1697.

Mr. Arden and Mr. Jones came to me yesterday after dinner, the latter had been with Brown, and heard him talk out all his impertinent rants and nonsense. The other methods he had thought on, as he mentions in his letter to Mr. Jones, which is here enclosed, were to petition the Lords Justices, and set forth the services he had done in discovering the ill practices of Lord Monmouth.

Mr. Jones disapproved of it, and gave him reasons against it. He answered he must not starve, and he scorned to live upon charity, and it was not a small thing would keep him: he at last grew cooler, and shewed a willingness to go to Ireland, if he might have wherewithal, and could get money to buy books, for he would study the law, and he had a brother and sister there he could live with. In short, he was told if he could keep in that resolution, endeavours would be used to assist him, and he was left to consider of it. Mr. Jones will see him again in a day or two, and what we have resolved on is, that if he will go for Ireland, five pound shall be given him in hand, and Mr. Jones will give him a note to receive five pound more at Chester, and when he is in Ireland he will procure him some farther assistance. We shall soon see how this will work. Mr. Jones would fain be rid of him too, and the rather since he has found a way to be troublesome to my Lady Westmoreland, to whom he has writ and left the letter at her lodgings. I shall always distrust his intentions till I find him gone. If there is any way to be secure of it, it is by keeping him short.

If one can get him into Ireland, it will be fit that some in the government there be acquainted with his character, either for their having an eye upon him, or that they may be prepared, if he should make his applications there on account of services.

Your Grace will please to consider to whom you

would rather communicate it; but, in my poor opinion, the Chancellor* would be the fittest person to be entrusted. He is prudent, active, and secret, and could engage my Lord Galway or both of the lords, as he saw occasion; but I suppose it will be time enough to write about him into Ireland, when one is sure he is there.

Sir Harry Colt was with me yesterday to tell me he had not heard of Prince,† since he went out of town ten days ago; and Mrs. Bernard, his other intelligencer, lies ill. So that, God be thanked, there is a cessation of discoveries.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 24th, 1697.

I received yesterday the enclosed from my Lady Westmoreland. I shall acquaint her by this post that endeavours are using to free her and others from the like impertinencies. I suppose Mr. Jones will give her the same account, and that she will engage him to put an end to it. I have not heard any thing of their management since my last.

* Mr. Methuen was appointed 11th of March, 1697, Chancellor, and on December 21st he was removed, and the seal put into commission and given to the Earl of Meath, the Earl of Longford, and Viscount Blessington.

† I suppose this ought to be written Price, the spy, informer, and swindler.

Sir Harry Colt came to the Lords this day, and brought three or four very insignificant letters from his friend Mr. Price, with a draught of Dover Castle, and a scheme how to take it; I suppose all made in town. Sir Harry made a learned comment on the obscure places of the letters, and my Lord Chamberlain said it was all stuff, and signified nothing. However, Sir Harry pressing that the man might be kept on to perfect his discoveries, and to that end that twenty pounds might be given him, it was consented to, and I know no remedy but to pay it to-morrow morning, when I may be confident it will be called for.

Before the Lords sat, Sir Harry gave me a troublesome visit, to tell me of Price's appearing again, and that he had told him something concerning your Grace, which he did not think fit to mention to the Lords till he had acquainted your Grace with it, as he intended by this post. I was not thought worthy to be entrusted with the secret; but it was at my tongue's end to tell him that he needed to have no reserve to the Lords on your Grace's account; but I thought it would come best from your Grace, and I suppose if Sir Harry writes, your Grace will send his letter to be shewn to them, that they may think of doing you right, for I know no better way of being rid both of the knight and his spy.*

* The letter of Sir Harry Colt to Lord Shrewsbury was to inform him that the informer Price, of whom we have heard so much lately

The Lords give very little credit already to what they have said of my Lord Yarmouth, and don't like that the reputations of persons of quality should be thus tossed about. I could not forbear putting in my word about Sir Harry's credulity, and told the story how the taking of Dover was discovered in an alehouse. I am apt to believe that Price don't know by whom he is fed all this time, or otherwise he would lay his inventions upon somebody else.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 28, 1697.

I had not heard of Mr. Jones till this morning that Mr. Arden came with him. He had not seen Brown till last night; he finds him in no disposition to go for Ireland, where he resolves never to return till he can live independent there. He run a division of rambles upon the services he had done, and the neglects he met with. Sometimes he said Mr. Jones was not his friend, at another time that he

in these letters, had at length made a distinct accusation against him, the Duke, declaring that he had combined with various persons to favour the escape of Sir John Fenwick, and had been actually seen in company with Sir John Fenwick by a Captain Roberts, then under the charge of aiding some of the conspirators to escape. Sir Harry Colt, with many expressions of devotion to Shrewsbury, offered to suppress Price's letter, but the Duke insisted that the whole should be immediately inquired into.

believes my Lord Chancellor would have relieved him, if it had not been obstructed by your Grace.

He gives no reasons for what he says, but is full of giddy imaginations. Being puffed up with foolish expectations, and at the same time pinched with necessity, there comes from him such a mixture of vanity and desperation, that Mr. Jones is sick of him, and finds that all persuasions make him worse and more inflexible, and if any thing is to be done with him, it must be by taking no further notice of him till he comes to himself, and shall make his own proposal. He was then expecting an answer to a letter he had writ to my Lord Chancellor, which he says was the last time he should trouble him, for if he had a return to his satisfaction he knew what he had to do, but could not be brought to explain himself further. Thus it stands at present between those two; the one rejects and despises what is offered him, the other tells him, if he do not understand when a kindness and a charitable office is intended him, he can be very well satisfied to have no more to do with him.

Yesterday morning my Lord Chancellor gave me two papers to read that were from Brown, one was a letter to my Lord, the other a petition to the Lords Justices, setting forth his services and the encouragement he met with from my Lord Chancellor, to hope for some relief from his Majesty at his return, and he desired some care might be taken of him in the meantime. His letter to my Lord Chan-

cellor was to let him know his wants, and that he had not two shillings to command. His Lordship supposes the petition was enclosed, as what he thought would procure him a supply, if it were but to prevent the delivery of it. I told my Lord of the endeavours we were using to send him away, that he was a refractory ungovernable fellow, and while he had any, the least hopes of living here, he would never quit this town; and, therefore, perhaps our success would depend upon the answer his Lordship should think fit to make him. He said he should let him know he had nothing to expect from him, or any one else that he knew of, and therefore did not understand why he was so often troubled with his importunities. I asked his Lordship how I was to behave myself, if he should bring or send me his petition to be presented to the Lords Justices. He said I ought to make no scruple of taking it, and laying it before them; and he did not care how soon it was there, since my Lord Archbishop was already apprised of that whole matter, and my Lord Orford would be in town, who was no stranger to it; and I added, that my Lord Chamberlain would be absent.

We shall see, therefore, whether he will apply himself to the Lords Justices or to Mr. Jones. I shall be glad he would determine it soon, since Mr. Jones talks of going out of town on Monday se'nnight, to make a visit to my Lady Westmoreland. I have told him he is not stinted to the sum

we had spoke of, which was agreed on. Only to let Brown understand it was in order to a journey, for if it had been more he would immediately have closed with it, without any thoughts of stirring. As for his application to Lady Westmoreland, that arose from a roving fancy, resolved to leave no way unattempted, and his knowing to what family Mr. Jones belonged.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

August 31, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 28th, and am more concerned to find how ridiculously you are engaged in a new wrangle, than I am surprised to see Sir Harry Colt the manager of any foolish or malicious accusation.

I immediately sent to know when my Lord Chancellor might be waited on, though I ought to be satisfied it is to no purpose to attempt it on these days; but besides that, I went to his house at six that evening, and thought it best to leave the letter, that he might be better prepared to speak with me this morning.

I called likewise at my Lord Orford's, who was expected in town, but was not then come. The letters and papers I had relating to this business I put into Mr. Nicholas Baker's hands, as being neces-

sary to the prosecution of Roberts and Webber.* I have sent for them, but he is at Epsom, and expected within a day or two. In the meantime I have spoke with Leget, the messenger, who was sent with a warrant to apprehend Alexander, who had the port warrant, and who gave the first information of the part Roberts had in conveying these people away, whereupon he was taken into custody by your Grace's warrant, and his trial is still depending. It should have been proceeded on these last Maidstone assizes, but they contrived to get Lad's wife out of the way, who was one of the principal evidences against him.

Your Grace may please to remember that Sir Basil Dixwell knew nothing of the beginning of this discovery, which arose from Mr. Mascall, a justice of peace of Romney, who had it from Lads, a fisherman, and Owler, with whom Waugh† treated for a ship by means of Captain Roberts.

Mascall communicated it to Brewer, member of parliament for Romney, and he brought it to the office; and I don't doubt but he and all the rest concerned will bear witness that nothing was omitted for prosecuting this discovery; and above all, the event best shews it, and therefore the calling this in question cannot but turn, I think, to your Grace's advantage, and confusion of those that know no end of bespattering innocence.

I am sure I shall not pretend to justify some

* Persons engaged in assisting the conspirators to escape from England.
† One of the conspirators.

gentlemen, but till I see more of it I can't persuade myself this matter is very deeply laid. I am sure it is very sillily contrived. I don't know how far they intend to mend it, but I am expecting to lay a heavier charge than this comes to, having accidentally met with the occasion for it, in an information that Dr. Newton shewed me against Chaloner for coining. It is one from Holloway, an eminent man of the trade, who is lately taken up, and begins to squeak. There was a piece of roguery he said he would not be concerned in, because he found Chaloner had communicated it to Price and Fitzgerald. I asked the Doctor who those were, but that was not yet explained. I desired he would get as particular information as he could concerning them, and I shall put my Lord Chancellor upon pressing it further, the Doctor having business to attend to this day.

I am pretty fully persuaded that this is the coining brotherhood who are forging these lies to blind the world, and to be praised one time or another for merit. I am apt to believe Roberts will deny every word of this story. I don't know why I may not question him whether he saw him at Dover, or not. What this Mrs. Scott and Gibbs are, I can't tell: when we see their faces and hear what they say, one may better judge of it. But at present I hear Gibbs is a professed second to Price for discovering, as they call it, the enemies of the government; and

I suppose he has been a tailor, which was a trade he could not thrive on.

I come now from my Lord Chancellor and Lord Orford, who are friendly affected with the impertinency your Grace is exposed to; but do not think this ought to be the occasion of any uneasiness to you. My Lord Chancellor remembers many of the passages relating to Sir John Fenwick's and Waugh's designs of getting away, and that your Grace was the only means of preventing it. I saw them apart, but they designed to meet and consider what was to be done.

A little before the Lords met, Sir Harry came to me and would needs shew me the letter he had from your Grace, and the information he had brought to lay before the Lords Justices, which I was passive in perusing, and he agreed with me that no credit was to be given to it, he remembering what your Grace had told him, that the apprehending both of Fenwick and Waugh was owing to your care. I took great notice of what he said, that he was for encouraging Price to go over to France, and when he had his letters and instructions for that purpose, he would have him secured by the help of Chaloner, and did not omit preparing the Lords for such a proposal.

There met the Lord Chancellor, Lord Archbishop, Earl of Romney, Earl of Orford. Lord Dorset returned yesterday to Kent.

Sir Harry was the first called in, and as one could wish, he began with the discovery of that day se'nnight, about seizing Dover Castle, which the Lord Chancellor and Lord Orford had heard nothing of before; but thought it was a point fit to be pursued, and that Roberts should be taken up to answer it. At last it came to the letter of the 22d of August, which Sir Harry made excuses for sending to your Grace, and told them he had your orders to lay it before them, and owned he thought it a very impertinent one. When it was read, my Lord Chancellor delivered his thoughts how impossible it was to be true; and my Lord Archbishop remembered what your Grace had said upon Kitson's meeting with Fenwick, which you thought very unfortunate, since the measures taken had otherwise been infallible for apprehending him.

In short, it was resolved to go to the bottom of this pretended discovery; the way proposed was, that Sir Harry should make Price believe he was to go into France, and persuade him to make himself ready for it as soon as possible, and to that end to get all the letters he says he was promised, and this to be despatched if it might be in two or three days; and when he had his full instructions, he was to communicate them to Sir Harry, who was to promise him he should have money for his journey, and at the time appointed to receive it, he should be apprehended; and at the same time warrants should be got ready for seizing Roberts, Lewin, Gibbs and

Mrs. Scot, the persons mentioned in the information, and when their examinations were taken, they should consider further how to proceed.

They did not like Sir Harry's proposal of taking him by Chaloner, or of ordering him any more money; so Sir Harry went away promising to perform his part, and I have directions to have blank warrants in a readiness from Mr. Secretary.

Some time after Dr. Newton was called in, who begun with a business of one Hicks and Man's the messenger, and afterwards fell upon the information he had against Chaloner, both for a design of counterfeiting Exchequer Bills and coining. In the course of his relation, he mentioned one Price and Fitzgerald, and being asked who they were, he said Holloway had told him that Price was employed in discoveries by the Secretary's office, and had lately received twenty pounds.

The Doctor did not think that discovery yet ripe, and was intending to let it lie till after the sessions, in hopes to have fuller matters against Chaloner, whom by the proofs he had at present, he could only convict of misdemeanour; but the Lords directed him to proceed immediately upon that enquiry; to carry it as far as he could now, and if he found any grounds for it, to lose no time in taking up Chaloner, Price, and all that he should find named, which I suppose he will do in two or three days. My wishes are that Price may be first taken up for coining, and that his blasting may begin

from thence. I don't doubt but one way or other this gang of rogues will be so laid open, that nobody shall venture to take their parts. What resolutions your Grace will take afterwards, must be left to your consideration.

I can't but be convinced that the Secretary's office is an insupportable trouble and vexation, and those that prefer their own ease would be in haste to discharge themselves of it. But your Grace is made for a public blessing, and have all the qualifications of it, therefore I should be sorry if you made any rash determinations for what you will do hereafter. All must allow that your health ought to be your first care, and every thing must submit to the recovery of it, but I hope your Grace will not resolve while you are ill, what you will do when you are well. It is a great happiness to be in business, without being under a necessity of sticking to it; one has then the freedom of one's own thoughts, the opportunities of doing good, and the satisfaction of preserving one's integrity, which I believe overbalance an idle inactive greatness

A private life becomes those only who are conscious they should make but an ill figure in public: but those who have a talent to outshine all others, would not do well to bury it in obscurity. I don't know where we can be without our uneasinesses, those therefore who know better how to guide, had better steer the ship, than leave bunglers to do it.

Mr. Baker is come to town; Legat has been with

him, and brought me the original letters of Mascall; the informations of Lad, taken upon oath, he has left in the country, but will fetch them from thence.

By what I have, I find the discovery was made to your Grace towards the end of May, which will be a full contradiction to your concerting Sir John Fenwick's journey, the 2d of June, at Cardigan House; the matter having been fully agreed on before that day between Roberts, Lad, and Waugh. My Lord Chancellor comes into the opinion that Price has not been lately at Dover. When Roberts is sent for, Legat shall go for him, and enquire into the truth of it. I make bold to keep your Grace's papers a post longer, that I may copy them before I go, not knowing what occasion there may be for it, since Sir Harry never fails to take his papers away with him again.

As for Brown, I think that matter must take its own course. My Lord Orford wishes he would petition the Lords. Any looking after him must make him intolerable; and his story is well enough known to keep Lord Monmouth* in awe.

I only send your Grace the entry of David Middleton's pass and certificate, which will justify what was done in that matter. Besides he did not go till Fenwick was taken. I send likewise Consul Hern's letter and information. It was long, and our hands are pretty full of a post day. It was shewn to the Lords the day after its arrival, and was copied for

* Peterborough.

the King the same night. Enquiry was likewise made after the father of Brown. It was committed to Mr. Firmin, who lives in Lombard Street, who made answer there was no such man as George Brown in that place. There were other Browns, but they had no sons, which Mr. Blathwayte was likewise acquainted with the same night.

We have had three Dutch mails this day. Mr. Yard will send your Grace all the news, which is not very good. The peace is deferred till the 10th, our style, and the Prince of Conti* is gone for Dantzick, with John de Bart; whether Benbow be gone after him, your Grace will judge by the enclosed.

The most unfortunate thing of all is, that Pointis, with five of his ships should fall into their mouths at Newfoundland, and they durst not stir out to take him, from the apprehension they had of Nesmond, who did not appear till some days after the other was gone, as appears by the enclosed relations from Captain Norris and the commander of the Dunwick, upon whose arrival fresh orders are gone to Sir George Rooke, to send out a squadron to look after Pointis.

Sir George came to Spithead on Saturday. There is nothing particular in Mr. Blathwayte's

* He went in hopes of obtaining the throne of Poland, although Augustus was in possession of the field. He carried with him a small body of troops, and a considerable sum of money. The people of Dantzic, however, would not permit his troops to land, and after some ineffectual efforts to form a Polish party, he returned to France.

letters. The Duke of Ormond and Earl of Essex are arrived.

The Swedish memorial is to be sent to the King to know his pleasure upon it, whether he would have the Lords return an answer, or what other directions he would give.

We had yesterday an Irish mail. There were two letters from the Lords Justices to your Grace, but they only related what had passed, which are summed up in the enclosed extract of proceedings there.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 2d, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 30th past, and shall write as directed to my Lord Chancellor of Ireland.* * * *

* The Lords met this morning, and Sir Harry came to them with seven or eight letters that Price had got together for his credentials, and promised to bring him three or four more to-morrow, and that he would be ready to go on Saturday: the letters were general harmless things that nobody was to be the wiser for. There was one from

* I have omitted part of this letter which referred only to Brown, who had been the tool of Lord Monmouth, and then informed against him, and to another government spy called Charlton, the only benefit of inserting which would be to shew how great a torment tools employed for base purposes may become to their employers.

Porter* to my Lord Griffin, which my Lord Archbishop thinks is his hand; it was a civil compliment to an old acquaintance, and does recommend the bearer: there was a superscription to my Lord Metfort,† but that was one of the letters he would not say who it came from. He brought a letter from Chaloner, which he left because of the names in it. I send your Grace a copy of it. At the beginning you will see what an undertaking this was to be, and by the conclusion I find Sir Harry has been telling him what was said of him.

It is intended that Price shall be taken up to-morrow in the evening, as also other persons mentioned in Chaloner's letter, as soon as they can be found. My Lord Romney writes to-night to Sir Basil Dixwell to secure both Roberts and Lansfield; when that is done a messenger will be sent for them.

I spoke on Tuesday to Mr. Ellis about the warrants, and Mr. Secretary came to town yesterday. I told Ellis the Lords desired the warrants to be signed with blanks for the persons, and they should insert the names when they were given out, only it was necessary to have them ready when occasion served, which they could not otherwise be, by reason Mr. Secretary was so often out of town.

I went to-day to know whether they were done, but was told Mr. Secretary did not understand why he should sign them till they were filled up. The

* Probably the Captain Porter of the assassination conspiracy.

† Drummond.

Lords therefore have spoke to him this night at council that he be with them to-morrow morning, and then it will be resolved what method they will take.

It has come into my thoughts that John Gibbons might be of some use in this matter, if he were but fit t be trusted. He has an old intimacy with Chaloner. If he has not been among them at the coining trade he has been one of their scouts, and if he be concerned with them in point of profit, I am afraid he will betray any one else rather than them. But he is a tool with so devilish an edge, that I dare not venture upon him without allowance, and yet I think something of this nature ought to be done.

What I apprehend is, when all these people are taken up it will be soon found that this charge on your Grace is a malicious falsehood; but we shall still be ignorant from whence the contrivance came, or who are at the bottom of it. When I have your Grace's thoughts of it I shall further take my directions from my Lord Chancellor and Lord Orford. My Lord Chancellor excuses his writing to your Grace till he can give you some further account of what is done.

I return your Grace your papers, having copied them with my own hand.

Mr. Rowley going to-morrow to Worcestershire, I send by him the copy of Smith's book; your Grace will direct what you would have done with the ori-

ginal, whether it shall be put under a cover and delivered to my Lord Chancellor.

We hear no more of the informer Robertson, but that he is taken up for debt, and the Lords would not bestow *5l.* to release him. I hope we shall hear of him too at the House of Commons' door, that all may have a share and a sense of the rogueries that are hatching.

Crymer, I hear, is clapped up in the Marshalsea for debt.

All the news we have is Benbow's letter to your Grace, and Sir George Rooke's letter to the Admiralty.

The Earl of Rivers and Mr. Stepney are newly arrived, who came from the Hague on Sunday; they left things in a great ferment. The ministers had been very high one with another; the mediator too was dissatisfied that there was a departure from the preliminaries; but the French were hardened against all expostulation, and nobody could tell what would be the issue of it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Sept. 4th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 1st instant. I wish we could hear of your Grace's being better. The peace I hope will come on in

due time, and before they have spent their stores of candles at Worcester.

Sir Harry Colt attended the Lords yesterday with more letters from Price, which were the same as the former. It was then resolved that Price should be secured that night at Sir Harry's house, where he was appointed to come, as also all the rest whom he had named in his papers, which were Mrs. Scott,* Gibbs, the perriwig-maker, Captain Roberts, of Dover, Stephen Lansfield, of Romney, Mr. Porter, of the Sea-clerk's† office, Lieutenant Gargrave, Major Horsenail, who writ the letters from Norfolk, Captain Lewin, Captain Robinson, and Morris, Price's man.

Mr. Secretary was with the Lords that morning, and left blank warrants for that purpose.

At that time their excellencies were acquainted that Chaloner had been taken up the night before by warrant from the Warden of the Mint, and that he had desired to speak with the Warden to let him know that he was employed in the service of the government, which might be disappointed if he continued in custody; he therefore pressed to be bailed, and desired the Warden would speak with Sir Harry Colt, and not with the Lords Justices, as the Warden proposed. Chaloner saying, if the

* Probably the same who was connected in some way with Smith, the spy upon the spy.

† I find it thus written in two places, and therefore do not venture to change it.

Lords knew what he was taken up for, though he were now released, he should be in Newgate in three days.

Most of the warrants were executed last night,* and their excellencies met at nine this morning, according to appointment, to take the examinations which lasted till three.

They began with Price's servant, who had lived with him about five months, and had been an attorney's clerk, and employed by him in these affairs. He pretended to know no more than as he was sent on messages by his master between Mrs. Scott, Gibbs and Porter, and he had been with his master at the Earl of Yarmouth's, and saw him well received there by my Lord Yarmouth, but he did not know the discourse they had together, his Lordship taking him into a room. By his relation Mrs. Scott introduced Price to my Lord Yarmouth, Porter, Gibbs, and all he has had access to.

My Lord Chancellor very dexterously made Morris write part of his story, and by comparing what he writ with the letters of recommendation that Price was to carry to France, he was very sagacious in finding out that one of the recommendatory letters was Morris's handwriting, though not so well to be distinguished by the character as the spelling, for the man writes several hands very well. He stood out a good while in disowning the letter to be his; but he at last confessed it, and

* All but Mrs. Scott were taken.

shewed one or two more he had writ of a quite different character, which his master either dictated or he copied after him.

He likewise owned he writ Stephen Lansfield's petition, his master having dictated it; but Lansfield signed it being brought to his master by Gibbs. Some of the hands he did not know, but some papers he thought were copied by Chaloner and Robins, particularly the list of names from the counties; but he said the originals were under Porter's hand, and they had them at the lodging; he was sent therefore with a messenger to fetch them.

Price being called on gave an account of his being introduced to Mrs. Scott's acquaintance by Mrs. Bernard, that she believing he came from France and was to return, had brought him to the knowledge of Lord Yarmouth, Porter, Gibbs, Lewin, and the rest, that they had communicated to him the informations he gave Sir Harry, to whom he was introduced by Chaloner and Robins. He had some small acquaintance with Chaloner formerly, but none with Robins till then: that what he had done was for the service of the government, and it was unlucky he was now prevented from further service, for he was to have a list this morning from one of the counties, where every gentleman had signed his own name; and Mrs. Scott promised him letters from my Lord Nottingham and Lord Huntingdon. Being asked as to the

letters he was to carry over, some, he said, were delivered him by the persons who writ them; others were sent him by Mrs. Scott, and left for him at an apothecary's in Great Queen Street, under cover directed to Jones which was the name he went by.

The letters he owned to have received himself were from Porter, Lewin, and another, the rest he shuffled off. He gave an account of his going to Dover with Gibbs about a fortnight or three weeks ago, that he had never seen Roberts before, and stayed only one night at Dover. There it was communicated to him how the castle might be surprised, but the scheme of it he made when he came home out of sketches he brought with him. The Lords let him go on in telling his own story, and put very few questions to him.

Gibbs was next called in, who denied that he knew either Price or Jones. He owned he had been in Kent lately, and he saw Captain Roberts, who owed him money. He confessed at last a gentleman went down with him, but he did not know his name. He was desired by a friend to accompany him, but he was under an obligation not to name the friend. The business they went about was, this gentleman intended to court a fortune at Canterbury, and Mr. Roberts was to assist in it, but he never saw the gentleman before nor since. He being thus upon the banter was confronted with Morris, who maintained to his face that he had

been with Price twenty times; but for all that he would own nothing.

Porter was then called in, and had his letter and list shewed him, which he could not deny to be his hand, and that Mrs. Scott brought him acquainted with Jones. He made very scurvy excuses for himself, that Mr. Jones desiring to be informed about gentlemen in the counties, that he had gratified him in it without knowing what he designed by it, or that he was going to France. By his behaviour it was pretty evident that he had been dipt;* and Lieutenant Gargrave did not bring himself off much better, who, by his intimate conversation with Porter, had often met Price at Mrs. Scott's, where, I suppose, Jacobitism has been broached in abundance.

These were all that have yet been examined. Mrs. Scott could not be found; Lewin is out of town. Horsenail is taken, and will be examined next time.

The Warden of the Mint came to the Lords and brought them the depositions against Chaloner, and the justification he had writ for himself, in which he says he had often been solicited to be concerned in coining and counterfeiting bills, but refused it; particularly one Price and Fitzgerald had pressed him to engage with them in counterfeiting Exchequer bills, but he would have nothing to do in it.

* "Dipped" in the affair, I suppose is meant, but the word is scarcely legible.

Chaloner shewed the Warden a certificate he had from one Price, employed in discoveries, that Chaloner was very assisting in it, and had first brought him to Sir Harry Colt.

The Warden understood him that this Price who signed the certificate, is the same who solicited him to counterfeit bills. He has directions to go on with Chaloner's prosecution, and to take care he be not bailed, but rather that he be committed for high treason. Chaloner shewed him the warrant he has for his pardon, which it seems he has neglected to take under the Great Seal.

Price having mentioned an apothecary in Queen Street, where his letters were left for him, I had orders to enquire into it, and the apothecary has been with me this evening, who gives me this honest account: That he knows Price very well: he went to school with his elder brother, and knew their father, who was a Welsh parson in Radnor, and his brother has now a benefice in Brecknock. That our gentleman was bound apprentice to an embroiderer, and served his time in Aldersgate Street. He never set up his trade, but has lived as he could: he was accused, above two years ago, for being concerned in counterfeiting bank notes, and was seized for it in Herefordshire, with Smith and Davis, which two last were brought up, but not Price; the reason he could not tell. He says he came up afterwards and compounded with the Bank, and had the King's pardon, as he thinks: after that he lived

with his brother in Wales till towards the latter end of last summer, when he came to town, and has lodged since in two or three places, which he has named to me, and I shall make some enquiries after him there. He married, about three months ago, a daughter of one Claypole. As to his letters, he told the apothecary that he must trouble him, for a friend of his one Jones, that his letters might be left at that shop, and he would call for them; and several letters had been so left, which Price fetched away, but he knows not from whence they came, or to whom they belonged.

I shall trace this matter a little farther about the bank notes, and go to Sir James Houblon for my informations, who, I remember, attended your Grace, when Mr. Robins treated with them to take up that matter.

There will be a kind of medley in this business, with a mixture of lies and some insignificant truths. These rogues, that are consummated in forgeries and counterfeiting, were aware it was necessary to have some varnish and gilding, but it is so thin, the base metal will soon appear through it.

The Lords have not yet touched upon what concerns your Grace. They are very sensible how fit it had been to have looked into this management sooner, for these workmen, with these tools, might have done what they pleased, and laid their brats at every man's door.

I must now pass from this to another plague.

Mr. Jones has been with me, having seen Brown; but first he met with a most impertinent letter sent to Colonel Purcell, in which he says he shall no longer depend upon my Lord Chancellor, for he finds your Grace has obstructed the favours he might hope for; and he attributes it to the endeavours of Mr. Jones and Mr. Arden, both which he rails at very liberally; and this they have got by his seeing them together at the coffee-house. I can't remember the twentieth part of the nonsense and impertinencies of that letter.

I desired Mr. Jones would send me a copy of it, not having time to take it myself, but I have it not yet. I found the poor man a little disturbed at it, but I set him more at ease when I readily concurred that he should so order it as to give Brown ten pounds if he was like to be thankful for it, and would employ it to keep him somewhere in the country. He tells me Mr. Arden left him a credit at Mr. Compton's, or otherwise I would furnish the money.

We had a foreign mail yesterday. Your Grace will best understand the news by the letters themselves, therefore I enclose what I have.

We can't doubt now but Pointis is got home and escaped a third danger, to our shame, for his were the ships that Harlow was afraid to engage in the soundings; he and his officers are ordered to be tried for it, but that can make no amends either in profit or honour.

Mun Turner died yesterday, at my Lord Wharton's, of a violent fever, which seized him the Sunday before, after a hard drinking bout with Bourchier and Sir Thomas Skepwith.

Mr. Stanhope has sent your Grace the examination he took of John King; it does not differ much from the former; however a copy of it was sent last night to the King. But your Grace need not be troubled with it, but at leisure.*

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 7, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 4th, but before I go any further I must acquaint you that the spirit of Brown is laid again. Mr. Jones has met with him and given him 10*l.*, which

* On the same day, Lord Somers wrote to the Duke, giving him an abstract of what Vernon has detailed more at large, and assuring him, that, the moment he had heard the new accusation, he had told the Lords Justices what he recollected of his exertions to secure Sir John Fenwick, which rendered the present charge perfectly absurd. Shrewsbury, however, wrote on the subject to the King, on the 8th of September, and made this fresh slander an excuse for pressing eagerly to resign. The King at once refused to receive the seals, and expressed his confidence in Shrewsbury with a noble frankness, which raises in our eyes a monarch whom we are little inclined to love, however much we may respect him. "Is it possible," he says, writing from Loo, on the 23d September, 97—"is it possible that you should be disturbed by the absurd accusations of the greatest knaves in the world? Believe me, you ought to be above it, for they can make no bad impression on any one: on the contrary, they will prove to your advantage; and you can have no idea of my impatience to see you, and how truly I regard you."

he promises to manage and live thriftily upon it out of town; but by his choosing Hampstead for his retreat, one may guess he intends to be more in town than out of it. His humour and folly is incorrigible; if he be kept quiet for some time, it is all that is to be expected, or one need care for. When Mr. Jones came to tell me this I was gone into the city to enquire after our worthy discoverers, so he left the enclosed letter for me.

I could not meet with the Houblons, they being at their country house; but then remembering my neighbour Sir John Huband concerned himself very much in that matter, I went to him, who has told me the secret of that discovery, how Robins first negotiated and introduced Chaloner to complete it. He remembers Price being involved in it with Smith and Davis, which last is still in Newgate: that Price was taken up with the rest in Herefordshire, but he made his escape he can't tell how, unless it were by the connivance of Gibbons, who was the person employed (I don't doubt but by Robins' contrivance) to apprehend that gang. Sir John says that Price afterwards compounded with the Bank, and paid back, as he thinks, 2,000*l.* or 2,500*l.* as his share of the profits he had made by counterfeiting bills.

But for a fuller information Sir John referred me to Sir William Gore, who, he said, was present at all the examinations, together with Obadiah Sedgwick, who is lately dead. I shall now acquaint the

Lords Justices how far I have gone, and receive their directions whether the informations shall be sent for.

The Warden of the Mint has committed Chaloner to Newgate for high treason. I can't but bless Providence that brought the Warden to the office in that interim while Sir Harry's letter was gone to your Grace. The finding Price's name in the information he has taken gave me good reason to suspect this was the man, and it then came into my thoughts we should have occasion one time or another to be satisfied who he was, which the Warden will be very instrumental in detecting. He has examined his two informers more particularly as to this man, who remember forty passages of what Chaloner has told them concerning him, which he* has taken in writing, and will bring to the Lords. Some of them† are that he‡ wondered how so silly and illiterate a cur could impose upon Sir Harry Colt and my Lord Chamberlain, and that he should gain such credit with the government. When he wanted money they indited a letter for him, upon which twenty guineas were given him, and they wondered at Whitehall how Price could write such a letter; that Chaloner expected a thousand or two by this discovery; that sixty or eighty people would be taken up shortly, and some of the best quality, and he proposed it to his

* *i. e.* The Warden. † *i. e.* The passages.

‡ *i. e.* Chaloner. I found so much difficulty in making out this very confused account that I have thought it best to note who the pronouns referred to.

friends to be assisting in the seizing of them; that Price was a bloody minded fellow, and would carry it too far, and bring himself into danger at last; that Robins and he did what they could to moderate him; that he, Chaloner had funned* the King formerly, he had since funned the Bank, and he would fun the Parliament before he had done with them; that Robins and he had told Price the government would not like trepanning people, or that he should make plots only to discover them; with more of this kind, which I can't remember.

Chaloner, in the paper he gave the Warden under his own hand, told him that Price proposed to him to be concerned in counterfeiting Exchequer bills, but he refused it. He has bethought himself since his being in Newgate, and now he says that Price proposed it only for the drawing in of others, that they might discover it.

The Warden has spoken with Fitzgerald, who is in the Counter, upon the business of the Bank bills; he was shy of owning any late transactions with Price, but he says formerly he carried a counterfeit bill of his for 3,000*l.* upon the Orphan's Fund, and received 1,000*l.* upon it. The Warden intends likewise to examine Davis. I thought it was not amiss to tell him that Chaloner had possessed Sir Harry that this prosecution of the Warden arose from the spleen that the Warden and Mr. Neale bore him for

* Apparently a slang expression of that day, implying to cheat or take in.

the informations he gave to the Parliament of the mismanagement in the mint, and that they both had threatened to hang him. The Warden promises to keep the secret, and to take the greater care to be well provided of what farther evidence he can get, and he will likewise make it his enquiry how far Gibbons can be proved to have been concerned in any of their affairs; he is such a bold crafty rascal, that to hope to get any thing out of him, one must be able to put him into a thorough fright.

Roberts, I hear, is taken, but he is not yet brought up. Captain Robinson is taken by the directions Price has given to Sir Harry since he was in custody. He told him likewise that Rottier lay in the same house, and the messengers said it was so, but he had been gone some days.

I suppose Robinson and Horsenail will be examined this morning. I hope the Lords at their leisure will confront some of these witnesses with Price, particularly Gibbs and Roberts, that we may see how their countenances are when together, as also that Mrs. Bernard may be sent for, who, I understand, introduced Price to Mrs. Scott, and gave some information herself about passes.

I proposed to my Lord Orford whether it might not be fit that the Archbishop of Canterbury, (who is well acquainted with my Lord Yarmouth), should let him know what he is accused of. I believe it would be a good way to bring out the trepanning part. My Lord seemed to like it, and would ac-

quaint my Lord Chancellor with it. It would have been very well if Mrs. Scott had been taken. I am glad I have nothing to answer for that it was not done. That was one of the warrants the messenger attended Sir Harry with, and took his directions in the execution of.

I do not know how soon others might write this story into Holland, and therefore I thought it best to be beforehand with them; by last post I gave my Lord Portland an account of it, and shall acquaint him with the further proceedings this night. I shall have the less time therefore to acquaint your Grace with other matters. As to the Irish mail that arrived on Sunday, you will see what that brings by the letters enclosed, and an extract of their proceedings. Things don't look well, the friends to the Papists are the prevailing party. It seems to me a great reflection on the Justices and Council, that they should no better understand the temper of that people, but send over bills in favour of Protestants and for the suppression of Papists, which the Parliament should cavil at and lay aside, besides the new way introduced of mending bills by a side wind, finding fault and keeping them back till others are sent them just as they would have them. Though that might be connived at when the mistake was made by the Council here, by adding the clause about Chantries, I don't know whether the practice ought to be admitted when the case is quite otherwise. I am surprised to see the Chancellor

write that the bill for ratifying the articles of Limerick is not like to pass unless the additional clause be inserted, when the Council represented quite the contrary. It is the greatest difficulty and blemish, if I may say so, upon the King, that at their persuasions he should depart from a point that they declared his honour only concerned in; and the Parliament to hesitate upon it at last, as if they were more careful of his honour than he was himself. If these things are as I understand them, I am afraid this will not pass for a very wise management.

We had a Dutch mail yesterday, I suppose your Grace's letters will inform you how it stands as to the progress of peace. Sir Joseph* and Prior say all waits for my Lord Portland's return.

Mr. Blathwayte writes that Count d'Aversburg is now beginning to solicit, in the Emperor's name, that the severities may be mitigated against the Catholic religion in Ireland, particularly that two bills may not pass, the one for banishing regulars, and the other about the education of children. The King lets the first take its chance, but he would not have the last proceeded on till his pleasure be known. I suppose that is preparing in Ireland, but is not yet come hither.

Mr. Blathwayte has likewise sent the duplicate of an order to Neville,† that at his arrival at Cadiz

* Williamson.

† After pursuing Pointis in the West Indies for some time in vain, Neville proceeded to the Havannah, according to the orders he had re-

with the galleons, he is to stay there forty days for the bringing home the effects: this has been concerted with the Dutch, but it is left to the Admiralty to consider it, and make such alterations as they think fit.

The Lords have met, and examined two more of the persons taken up, viz., Horsenail and Robins, the former a man of seventy, who owned his great folly in an idle conversation with a young fellow, and did assure their Excellencies, that there was not a true word spoke by either of them; he had writ to them indeed from Norfolk, of men that would be ready to serve King James, but he knew not one of them, nor ever opened his mouth about it.

The other was a turned out exciseman, ready to steal for want, and one may perceive the discourses with both of them have been mere trepans.

Roberts is not yet brought up, but I suppose will be here by Thursday, after that the Lords will resolve what to do. Sir Harry promises to take Mrs. Scott in the meantime, she is more worth having than the rest.

Dr. Newton* gave the Lords an account of the examinations he had taken. He has shewed me a more particular one this night, he having been again

ceived, to convey the rich Spanish galleons to Europe. The Governor of the Havannah, however, not only refused to put the galleons under his convoy, but would not suffer his vessels to enter the harbour; and Neville proceeding to Virginia, died there, it is said of disappointment and sorrow.

* Sir Isaac.

with Chaloner, who banters as to his honest intentions about the plot, but he says Price was a rogue, and intended to prevaricate; he now comes to own that Price proposed to him within three months, a design to counterfeit Exchequer bills, and was attempting it, but could make nothing of it. This now must be about the time, they penned themselves upon Sir Harry. The Doctor will go to him again to-morrow, and keep him to this point only, and I hope he will fix it. The rogue is at Sir John Fenwick's game, and says he has a secret which is only fit to be communicated to the King, since it would be his ruin if he should tell it, intimating as if some in power were not to be trusted: if he thinks to keep himself for the Parliament by such a stratagem, he will be mistaken.

I send your Grace a letter of Mr. Bridgeman's, writ by the directions of the Admiralty, which shews their intentions of sending Mitchell as far as the South Cape. Their Excellencies have approved of it upon my Lord Orford's telling them, there would be a force sufficient left behind, which appears by the list enclosed: and it is ordered that those ships be got into a readiness for service, and secrecy is enjoined.

I thought I could not omit acquainting my Lord Chamberlain with Price's pranks: perhaps that may occasion his letter to your Grace. I know not how Chaloner has come to name him to his comrades; I suppose it must be upon Sir Harry's telling

them he would carry the discoveries thither, as he at first intended; or otherwise it is not to be believed he would have any thing to do with such rakes. He writes to me that he hopes their intelligence will be treated as it deserves.

Among the letters is one that fool Onslow sends me to be conveyed to your Grace with great care. God knows whether we have more discoveries.

The letter from Canterbury to your Grace is ordered to be laid before the Council.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 9th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 6th. The best enquiry I think the Lords Justices can go upon, is the prosecuting the discovery, how far this set of rogues have proceeded towards counterfeiting exchequer bills. It is certainly of the highest concern to the nation, and such a piece of dangerous villainy as every individual man must be sensible of, whereas very many think themselves little concerned what right is done to particular persons under false accusations. And there are several considerations and interests concurring towards supporting the credit of witnesses and informations, according to people's affections or disaffections, not only to the government but to the persons that

happen to be named. But in what concerns property and the coin, and where every man may fear to be undone if the counterfeiting designs prove successful, the prejudices and indignation of people will run all one way, and the pretences of serving the government in other respects, will serve only to aggravate the crime, and shew the impudence of the offenders. There appears enough already to call these fellows to a strict account upon these matters, and I hope, upon their examinations, and being confronted one with another, much more may come out.

The Warden of the Mint was with me last night, having been again with Chaloner, and put into writing more of his confession. He now says, that when Price proposed to him the being concerned in counterfeiting bills, he told him he knew some merchants that would take them off their hands, and for three hundred bills of 10*l.* each, they would lay them down 2,000*l.*, and pay 300*l.* by advance. And when Chaloner hesitated upon it, it was pressed by Price that they should do it only for this 2,000*l.*, and then they might discover it to the government by the means of Sir Harry Colt, and have a reward for the discovery. This, Chaloner said, he advised upon with Mr. Robins, but he was against it, as thinking the government would not be satisfied with the discovery only of what they had done themselves; and thereupon Chaloner says he refused the proposal. But he tells the Warden he was preparing something to be printed against the meeting of Parliament, to

shew how the counterfeiting of exchequer bills may be prevented. I don't doubt but he has well studied the point, and the House of Commons were to be amused with his tricks of this kind this winter, as they were the last with his coining. But the only sure way to prevent both would be to hang up those who have made themselves so skilful; yet I don't see how they can be reached till they come to impeach and charge one another a little further. I have asked the Warden about his proofs against Chaloner for coining; they are of facts of four or five years standing, and the evidence is but slight. It is enough for his commitment, but I am afraid not yet sufficient to convict him. As for Robins, I question whether any body knows his ways except Chaloner, or perhaps Gibbons; and one can hardly expect that either of them will lay him open.

Captain Lewin was taken at Windsor, his wife having some employment about the Duke of Gloucester. I suppose he will be examined to-day.

Stephen Lansfield is brought up from Romney Marsh, but Roberts is so ill of a fever that the messenger writes that he can't be removed. He tells the messenger he can't imagine why he should be sent for, being sure he has done no new thing that can be laid to his charge. It being doubtful whether he will live or die, I should be of opinion to take his examination upon the place, not only as to the project about seizing Dover, but in relation

to all other discourses he had with Price, particularly what he had said to him concerning Sir John Fenwick, and those who were privy to his design of going beyond sea. Perhaps it is not likely he will answer to this last, since he is still under a prosecution for it, unless he finds himself going out of the world, when truth may be said. Yet, however, it is going as far as we can in the condition he seems to be in.

The Lords have met, and Sir Harry Colt attended them. He brought Mrs. Bernard to the office, in expectation she should have been examined, but their Excellencies thought fit to defer it, and told Sir Harry they would rather hear her when Mrs. Scott was taken, whom Sir Harry thinks he shall have by to-morrow morning.

Lewin was examined, and owns all that Price has said of him as to his readiness to assist King James. He said he was imposed upon by a young man who pretended to be of quality, and to have an estate of 5,000*l.* or 6,000*l.* per annum; that his business was to have got money out of him, therefore he told him he could get forty or fifty men if he had money. He did not disown, likewise, that he was to have been concerned with Cole and Robinson, who were Sir John Friend's acquaintance at the time of the last plot, and hoped his ingenuity* would plead his excuse. This man is a further proof how easy the

* For ingenuousness.

Jacobites are to lay themselves open, and that Price had thrust himself into a confidence with some of the hasty inconsiderate fools among them.

Lansfield was called in and disowned every thing laid to his charge, which was sending a petition to Lord Melfort* to be considered for his services, which petition was dictated by Price, writ by his man Morris, and signed by Lansfield, who being shewn his handwriting, said it was very like his own, but he was sure he did not write it. He owned his acquaintance with Gibbs, and that was all.

Dr. Newton then brought the informations he had taken from Chaloner, upon which it was resolved to send for Price and hear what he would say to it. Here he appeared a very cunning dexterous rogue, and evaded all things with great quickness and subtility; he readily apprehended by the question asked him, that Chaloner had said something to his prejudice, and evaded it with as much art as could be, helping off things with cautious lies that should have some resemblance of truth. He shuffled through the business of counterfeiting bank bills as having had indeed some hand in putting them off, but the bank considering his youth, and how he had been drawn in, had forgiven him upon his brother's paying 500*l.* or 600*l.* for him, and he had

* James Drummond, Earl of Melfort, during some time Secretary of State for Scotland under James II. He remained ever attached to his royal master, and was at this time with him in exile, and one of his chief ministers.

their discharge and the King's pardon for it, which latter I believe is a lie.

As to the late intention of counterfeiting Exchequer bills, he said one Randall had proposed it to him, and he had communicated it to Chaloner for two reasons: one was, for finding out how far he was concerned in it, as not being without some suspicions of him; and the other was, that if he were clear of it, they two might go in the discovering it.

He had prepared himself likewise to answer the putting into Mr. Cott's hands some recommendatory letters that were writ by his man; those being shewn him again, he said those were but copies of his man's writing, for he had lost the originals, but remembering what they contained he had set it down and made his man transcribe it; it was done in different characters, that his negligence might not appear in losing letters, nor the government want the benefit of them.

He disowned his being concerned in any ill thing since the bank bills, and having received so great a favour as to be pardoned his first fault, he was resolved to make the government an amends by any service he could do, and he was sure his informations were true as to what he had heard from the parties themselves, or been told concerning them. He added some particulars he had recollected since, which he learnt from Mrs. Scott of several Jacobites, some of which had horses ready, and others arms.

The Lords find such a mixture in the man of

truth and lies, that it is a perplexed matter to know what to resolve on. They intend, however, to-morrow, to speak with Sir Harry Colt, and let him know part of the observations they have made, and see how far he thinks of concerning himself for him, nothwithstanding the character he now appears to have, and his attempt even to impose upon them by counterfeit letters; and for these that own they have been running into treasonable discourses, they do not see how they can avoid delivering the informations, that he may consider whether there be sufficient matter to proceed against them. But the enquiry is still to go on into Price's life and conversation, to which end the Warden of the Mint is again to examine Fitzgerald, an old acquaintance of Price's, and Sir William Gore is to attend to-morrow, with the informations given to the Bank two years ago about counterfeiting their bills, and who were concerned in it.

They suppose it will not be long before Roberts shall be well enough to be brought up, and perhaps Mrs. Scott may be taken at the same time, and then the examination will be taken of what relates to your Grace, which being but a hearsay from these people, it would be to no purpose to ask questions about it till they appear.

The council have met this evening, but had little to do; the letter to your Grace from Canterbury was read, upon which Lesley Finch is ordered to be sent for in custody. I have acknowledged the

receipt of that letter. My Lord Abingdon's letter was read at council, by which he disowns his having any books that belong to the office of Chief Justice in Eyre; the letter is put into Mr. Attorney's hands, to consider what is fit to be done upon it.

A proclamation was ordered this evening, with a reward for the discovery of those who have lately robbed Sir John Bank's park, and other parks in Kent.

My Lord Manchester desired I would write to your Grace to know what date his certificate should bear of his departure out of the King's presence, which is to regulate his allowance of 10*l.* per day. He hopes it will be from the time your Grace directed him to prepare for his journey, which he says was the last of July, and he proposed that Mr. Stanyon might have a certificate bearing even date with his.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Sept. 11th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 8th. Since you are fixed in your resolutions of quitting, and find yourself more at ease in cutting the knot than in spending time to untie it, it will not become me to say any thing in opposition to it, only I believe your Grace will please to remember, that you told my Lord Chancellor you would take

him and my Lord Orford into the consultation as to the manner of doing it, and you will consider whether writing this so soon to my Lord Chamberlain will agree with that intention.* He is not yet in town, nor is he expected till Wednesday next. If different measures are like to be taken by these three upon your Grace's resolutions, I don't know but this early communication may disappoint some of them. If the King were like to keep the secret, and would let it go no further till the proper time, perhaps your Grace's writing to my Lord Chamberlain may as well be deferred, at least the doing it in a determinate manner, which will only put him upon ordering things his own way. Your Grace will excuse me for writing thus of my own head, and shewing my ignorance in pretending to advise, but I have a zeal for your service, though it be not according to knowledge, and am concerned that your friends should not have any imagination that you would break from them abruptly.

I am not able to express the deep sense I have of my obligations to your Grace, that you are pleased to have me in your thoughts upon this occasion. So much goodness encourages me to lay before you more than I would presume otherwise ever to have done. My circumstances, and the care of a pretty large family

* Vernon seems not to have been aware, that on the same day that Shrewsbury wrote to the King pressing for leave to resign, he wrote also to Lord Somers and to Lord Orford, begging them to communicate his purpose to Lord Sunderland the Chamberlain.

will require my endeavours to keep myself employed for our support, but what I have gone through these three summers successively, without having the least ease or leisure in the winter, by reason of a constant attendance in the House of Commons, I find is such a fatigue, that one who is turned of fifty, can't expect to hold it out longer. If there be any that have a tolerable opinion of me, I fear it is that they think me a pains taker in this station, and therefore only fit to be worn out in it; and that I should cheerfully submit to, if it were in your Grace's service, whom I have the highest veneration for, and have found an indulgent master, to pass by all my infirmities, and what I take for the greatest honour, has been pleased to admit me to his trusts, and had a confidence in me. But to be turned over to serve out the poor remainder of my time with God knows whom, is that which cuts me to the soul, and I can say no more of it, for the grief that overwhelms me. On the other side, I am as much unprovided what to propose as I am doubtful whether any thing would be granted me in another way. If the prize office* were but an employment of continuance, I could set up my rest and ask no more; but I hope that commission was vacated yesterday at Ryswick, so that I am now parting with all my emoluments at once, and have nothing to stick to, but the small provision I have been able to make, which is inconsiderable, the expences of living, and

* He was one of the Commissioners of Prizes.

the education of children having eaten up the rest. I find a necessity of mentioning now to your Grace what I have hitherto done but very obscurely, as thinking it not only unreasonable, but what likewise would have a taste of vanity. The last winter, when your Grace's recovery was more doubtful than I I hope it is now, my Lord Chamberlain took an occasion to tell me, that when there was a vacant Secretary's place, he would recommend me to it, and if he had any interest nobody else should have it, and this he repeated afterwards occasionally. I was so little pleased with the proposal, that I dreaded it, and from the beginning told his Lordship, that I did not doubt but he would better consider whom he recommended, and not disparage his judgment in making so improper a choice.

What passed on this subject was always in very few words on both sides; it looked, however, as if he had such an intention at that time. I hope he has thought better of it since, and finds himself mistaken in his man. All I could ever bring myself to say of it to your Grace was, that I found my Lord Chamberlain was looking out for little men to make them Secretaries of State, and such as were framed for a dependance on a Premier minister. If such a thing be still in petto, I must look upon myself as quite undone. I know myself in all respects so utterly unqualified for that station, that I must be mad if I don't decline it, and exclude myself from any other pretensions after having refused it.

I see what a figure Sir William Trumbull makes in that place, and one who is like to be some degrees worse than he, must be guilty of extreme folly, if he do not keep himself least in sight. To be a Secretary of State without quality, without friends, without an estate, without elocution, and without every thing that is proper for it, is dressing up a ridiculous figure only to be hooted at. I can but think the offering such an employment to one in my circumstances, would be like giving me the strapade, they are both winding a man up to a great height and letting him fall again immediately, so that he may not fail to break his bones or be unjointed. I know not therefore I have any thing more earnestly to beg of your Grace, than to consider how I may be preserved from honourable ruin, and that I may not be exposed to give a saucy denial where the highest favour is intended, and I should regard it so, if my own imperfections, both of body and mind were not so remarkably visible. If any thing else comes into your Grace's thoughts that you believe I may pretend to, and give the King satisfaction in, I have all the reason in the world to depend upon your generous favours and patronage, from which only I can hope for any comfortable subsistence. God forbid what you do for me should be your last endeavours! I shall trust in Providence, that the world shall enjoy a lasting blessing in you.

As to our discoverers, Sir William Gore was yesterday with the Lords, and gave them an account

of those concerned in counterfeiting bank notes and orphans tickets. He named three as the principal, which were Chaloner, Price, and Davis. Price's composition he said was about 900*l.*, which was paid by his brother the parson.

It was resolved by the Lords, that Price should be directed to draw up his information in form, so as he will depose it, that it may then be considered of putting it into Mr. Attorney's hand, though they think he will not be of opinion to prosecute any upon this evidence, since so much of trepanning will appear in it.

I was sent to carry Price the message, and in the meantime, Sir Harry Colt was called in and acquainted with the observations the Lords had made upon the whole matter—what character Chaloner and Price had, and how Price had even attempted to impose upon them by his forged recommendatory letters. I was not by at this passage, but my Lord Chancellor was pleased to tell me afterwards, that Sir Harry fell in with their sentiments, and began to think he was intended for a dupe, and of his accord expressed some resentments against Robins for bringing these people to him and vouching for them.

When I went to Price I found him drawing up remarks against Chaloner, who he finds has characterised him to the Lords, for which he would be quits with him. I got him to read what he had writ, for he had not finished it: the substance of it

was, that Chaloner advised him to make a strict bargain with the government for what service he should do them, or otherwise they would use Price as they had done himself and others; that they were ungrateful, and nothing so easy as to bubble them. For his part, he would never pretend to serve them unless it were for his own ends, and secure himself a protection. I asked Price what was meant by that; he said he supposed it was for the counterfeiting *guineas*, which was Chaloner's livelihood. He would not own that he ever saw him coin, but he has seen him pull out handfuls of guineas, which Chaloner told him were of his own making.

I acquainted their Excellencies with what the gentleman was about, who were for having him encouraged to go on with it. I went, therefore, to Price this day, to see how he proceeded in his narrative, and to tell him that he and Chaloner gave such different accounts of one another, that they should be glad to know which of them was to be believed, and therefore they would see what they heard he was writing in relation to Chaloner, which he promises to get ready by Tuesday, together with his long deposition. He read to me part of it, by which I perceive his first design in getting acquainted with Mrs. Scott was upon a project laid between Mrs. Bernard, himself, and another lawyer, how to get some trunks of plate and goods that one Mrs. Louvain had lodged with Mrs. Bridgeman when she

went for France. He had gone so far in it as to go to the Recorder for his warrant to search Bridgeman's house, but he refused it.

Price had such hints given by Mrs. Bernard to make him appear like one lately come from France, that Mrs. Scott, who is a violent Jacobite, easily believed it, and she drew in all the rest to the same persuasion. Some of which, as he tells it, were likewise very ingenious, imposing upon themselves; and when he found this belief grown upon them, then it was brought to Sir Harry.

I could not forbear trying him further than any had yet gone with him, and asked him how he came to bring me in, in such a manner. He said he had put it down no otherwise than as he had heard it from Roberts, and had not varied from what he told him, for otherwise he should not have known there was such a place as Cardigan House:* he did not know whether any part of it were true or not; but says, that whatever is in any of his letters are just as they came to his knowledge. I asked him how that came to be in a letter by itself, and not with the other account of his journey to Dover; he said that was as Sir Harry directed it; for when he told him of it, he bid him set it down by itself, and he writ it in Sir Harry's parlour. My business was not to argue with him, otherwise I wanted still to be satisfied how he came to add to the heap what he

* Where the Duke of Shrewsbury was said, by these conspirators, to have met Sir John Fenwick.

pretends Mrs. Scott and Gibbs told him in relation to the same affair so long before. I left him, bidding him make all ready by Tuesday.

Before the Lords rose yesterday, a man and a woman came to them to shew them some counterfeited Exchequer bills that had been put off by Don Antonio, a Portuguese, who is since fled. The way of counterfeiting was by taking out the sums and inserting larger, so that a 5*l.* bill was turned into 50*l.* or 60*l.* This was just what the Warden of the Mint was informed Chaloner intended to do. How it will come to be made out I don't know, but I am verily persuaded these came out of Chaloner's mint.

Sir Henry Colt tells the Lords he heard Robins was gone somewhere into the country, and he frequently writ letters to know how it went with Chaloner and Price. There is some deep mystery of iniquity in these rogues which I wish may ever come to be fathomed.

Mr. Stanhope's letter to your Grace was copied and sent to Mr. Blathwayte with the deposition: that is another puzzling business, for King can neither find Brown's father nor tell us what use can be made of his information, more than to search foreign ships for three or four persons he knew at St. Germains four years ago, and he expects to be maintained till he finds them. The Lords have been so busy that I had not the opportunity to acquaint them with his pretensions, but shall do it on Tuesday.

My Lord Bellamonte is not yet gone, he has still one thing or another that happens to delay him: he has spoke, as he told me, to my Lord Chancellor about a Letter his lordship would give directions in; but I have heard no more of it, and this is some time ago. I shall ask my Lord Chancellor about it when I see him next.

Mr. Rowley has Smith's book to take another copy of it.

A Dutch post arrived yesterday, which still keeps up the hopes of a peace. I suppose your Grace will have the best account of it from my Lord Villiers' letter: however I send that of Sir Joseph Williamson.

All that Mr. Blathwayte wrote is, that the King supposes Benbow has pursued the orders given for following De Bart; but instead thereof, we heard yesterday of his arrival on the coast of Suffolk.

I send Monsieur Caillaud's letter in answer to mine about the correspondents.

The Irish mail arrives very late this night. I hope the enclosed for your Grace will tell you all their news, for I shall not have time to gather it out of other letters.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 14th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 11th. It is very afflicting that your Grace should

find no relief or remedy against this unaccountable distemper.

I suppose what I writ last gave you somewhat a clearer idea of the rogues we have to deal with; that the foundation of these magnified intentions of serving the government was upon a cheat, projected for getting Mrs. Louvin's* plate out of Mr. Bridgeman's hands, and Mrs. Scott, with some other fools' credulity, turned it afterwards to these purposes, which has filled this young fellow with an excess of vanity, and he still believes he has highly merited.

He desired to speak with me yesterday, and gave me the paper he had drawn up against Chaloner. Having it now before me, I can tell your Grace more distinctly what it contains. When he *first* resolved on making discoveries, Chaloner's advice was that he should do nothing till some inferior person had made a bargain for him, that he might be at a certainty of being paid for his service, telling him otherwise they would bid him go on till he had done all the service he could, and afterwards they would undervalue his services in order to shuffle him out of a reward; that if he did not do it he would be bubbled, but if he would be ruled by him they would bubble the government, who were the easiest to be cheated of any men in the world.

He says further that Chaloner used many other scurrilous expressions, adding that he would do

* So written here, Louvain in the preceding letter.

nothing for the government, but only that he might have a colour under their protection to act something else, meaning, as he conceived, his old trade of coining, and if it had not been for giving him an opportunity the better to carry on his private designs, Chaloner said he would never have endeavoured serve the government. Chaloner told him often to make his discoveries stronger. It was no matter whether they were exact truths or not, the government wanted a plot, and he must make one for them.

When he had his orders to go for France, Chaloner bid him get, if he could, a guinea die from Rolier, that he might go to work at home. Price telling him that Exchequer notes would do better, Chaloner answered there were finer engravers in France who would do a plate for twenty shillings.

Price says he suspected that Chaloner was about counterfeiting Exchequer bills, he being the person who formerly counterfeited the Bank notes, and therefore it was he told Chaloner what was the way Randal proposed to do it in. It was then Chaloner told him of the newer way he had of washing out the writing and altering the sums. Price says that to sound Chaloner a little further he told him of a chymist of his acquaintaince who had a liquor, the fume whereof would take out any writing, to which Chaloner answered there was no such thing, and he would give him a year's time to find out his secret. Chaloner shewed Price a paper where the writing

had been washed out and it was prepared again to bear ink as at first; after that he took a paper of Price's writing and brought it again with part of it washed out, and room left to write any thing between the words.

This is the sum of what this paper contains, but the heads of some of them are more enlarged upon. He told me besides he had heard Chaloner say that by coining and other tricks he had got in his time 30,000*l.* or 40,000*l.*, and that Mrs. Porter, the woman he keeps, had been of great use to him in several of his affairs.

This I intend to lay before the Lords when they meet, who perhaps may think fit to send for Chaloner and let these two empty themselves of what they know of one another, not only for finding out the truth in what relates to Price's informations, but for the discovery, if it be possible, how far they are concerned in counterfeiting Exchequer bills; that it is between them I am fully persuaded in myself.

Price has sent me his informations in form, and running them over, I found he had left out his whole account of the 11th of August, whereupon I went to him to know what his meaning was. He said he had put that down so fully in his letter to Sir Harry, that nothing was to be added to it. I told him what the Lords expected from him was that he should give an ample and entire narrative of all he had told or writ to Sir Harry, what else he knew relating to

the government, and to draw it up so as he would swear to, and therefore no part was to be omitted.

He is gone about and promises to make it ready by the time the Lords sit. I shall acquaint their Excellencies with this passage. It would not have been fit to give any ground for a suspicion as if he and I had concerted the suppressing this part. On the contrary, one would see how he will relate it the second time, and what he will swear to. When that is done, I hope Gibbs will be examined again as to that particular, and that they shall be confronted. Another reason he gives me why he had not set it down was, that their Excellencies had not examined him as to that particular, nor asked him any questions about it.

Legate writes me word that he thinks Captain Roberts may be fit to be removed in two or three days more.

Mrs. Scott is not yet taken, but the messengers are gone this morning to a place where they are told she may be found. They said she was yesterday at I know not what lawyer's chamber in the Temple, and if they had come a little sooner they had taken her.

I take it for granted Gibbs and Roberts, and Mrs. Scott, if she can be found, will deny they had any such discourse with Price, and he will as positively affirm it. Now, as to his other informations, most of the other parties have in effect owned what he has charged them with, except Gibbs, who is, as

it were, mute hitherto, and Lansfield and Gargrave are both upon the denying part, but the Lords can't believe them innocent. Price's man justified to Lansfield's face that he saw him sign the petition, and yet he stood it out to the contrary.

What concerns Sir John Fenwick and the private pass given him, is pretended to be no more than a hearsay from these people, but chiefly Roberts, who only is particular, (if he said it,) for the others are brought in only in the gross, and as if they had it from him. If they deny it the sting of the calumny is pulled out; but yet I am puzzled to know what reparation can be made to your Grace for sending such a lie abroad; the comfort is, it carries its own confutation with it, and when it comes to be spoken of what your Grace did in that matter, it will go beyond what any denials or witnesses could say towards the clearing you. But at present the people are kept in the dark as to all this examination, and since it must have been taken up at one time or another, I can't but be glad that it is before the meeting of parliament, while one may have time and liberty to make an impartial inquiry into the credits of our informers. Besides it will be a singular good fortune to the nation that the enquiries fall in at the nick of time that counterfeit bills are creeping abroad; by this accident the forgers being as it were already pointed at. By the examinations taken by the Warden of the Mint and others the whole gang is now pretty well known. There are about

ten or twelve of them, and not one of them unknown to Gibbons, whom I have spoke a little roundly to, and he protests he will omit no endeavours for apprehending them, if it be required of him. I have let my Lord Orford know so much, and he thinks it ought to be laid before the Lords.

I have read Sir William Blackett's letter, and can't but wonder that a gentleman of his good understanding will be sending informations to the prejudice of persons in their reputations and employments upon so uncertain grounds. I believe there is very little or nothing in the surmise; however I will take my first opportunity to satisfy your Grace by outstaying Mr. Yard's man, for I would not have him so much as imagine he is under suspicions if there be no occasion for it; and with Sir William's leave, it would be both easier and fairer for him to get a sight of these ill letters in the country than it will be for me to do it here.

Before I send your Grace the draught of a certificate for my Lord Manchester, I would willingly speak with Mr. Montague. I believe, in strictness, the certificate should run from the time he takes leave of the Lords Justices, since the King is not here; on the other side, it would be hard not to gratify him as far as you think the King will be willing to allow it. Perhaps the King may think there is enough from keeping him off from pretending to his allowance ever since he took his leave of the King in *April* last.

Sir Lambert Blackwell is at last, though but newly gone: they sailed on Saturday last; he has stayed some time for a convoy.

I return your Grace Colonel Mordaunt's letter; there will be no need of sending those advices to the Admiralty, they having them already from Captain Dawes. I shall know by-and-by the Lords Justices' pleasure as to the boat, but methinks that should depend upon what the post will bring, whether peace or not. Not knowing whether it may be necessary or not, I send your Grace an extract of the last Irish letters.

Thinking it a duty, as well as for your Grace's service, to inform the absent Lords Justices of Price's affair, I send your Grace my Lord Steward's answer upon it.

The Lords Justices have met, and Price's informations were read over, which don't shew him what Chaloner called him, an ignorant, illiterate fellow. Their Excellencies have further directed that he give an account, in writing, of his introduction to this business, viz., the plate design, which he is to make ready by Thursday, then he will be sent for to sign it and swear it, and their Excellencies will put it into Mr. Attorney's hands to see what use he thinks fit to make of it: by that time they hope Roberts may be here. Legate writes he was to carry him to Canterbury yesterday, and bring him up by easy journies. Sir Basil Dexwell will not believe him to be so much ill as he pretends to be.

Mrs. Scott can't yet be found. Sir Harry brought Mrs. Bernard again to be examined, but it is deferred till Price has told all his story, and then she will be best understood.

The Lords do not intend to be at the trouble of running into the enquiry, who it is has counterfeited exchequer bills, but intend to consult with the Treasury to whom that shall be committed, and they will be furnished with all the lights already given.

We have a joyful post this morning that brings us news of peace. I understand Sir Thomas Frankland sent you immediate notice of it by express. I hope it was as good a cordial as ever Sir Thomas Millington prescribed, and that your Grace will be willing to enjoy a quiet world, after having for so many years endured a troublesome one.

Their Excellencies thought the news was not entirely to be depended upon, till Prior's arrival with the confirmation of it, who was put ashore, I know not where, in Suffolk, so that he came not to the office till four o'clock, when the Lords were up. In pursuance, therefore, of their directions, I despatched the communication of the good news to my Lord Mayor, my Lord Lucas, and the Prince and Princess. This has been a brave evening of joy, noise, and bonfires. The ambassador's letter to the Lords Justices is dated from Ryswick, the 21st (N. S.), at three in the morning. They write, in short, they had signed the treaty with France that moment, and despatched Mr. Prior to give a more particular ac-

count. He has brought a copy of the articles, which I had not time to look into.

I find the separate article allows the Emperor to the 1st of November (N. S.), to be included,* and if he don't think fit to accept it, that is to make no alteration in what others have concluded.

We have an Irish post late this night, where things go well again, and I refer your Grace to a short extract of those letters here enclosed.

I saw my Lord Manchester to-day, who will bring Mr. Montague.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

16th Sept., 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 13th; the continuance of your favour and goodness is a great support under the alterations I am to expect in my concerns.

I am sorry I should leave your Grace in doubts concerning the delivery of your letters of the 8th, to my Lord Chancellor and Lord Orford.† Those letters coming on Friday morning, I had the opportunity of putting them into their own hands, which I should not have had on any other day, and I hoped your Grace was so well assured, that whatever letters you sent would be taken care of, that I

* In the treaty of peace.

† These were the letters announcing that he had again tendered his resignation to the King.

have forborne mentioning in this, as on other occasions, that the letters were delivered.

I believe I understood the reason from my Lord Chancellor the same day, why his answer was not immediately returned; finding he was last in the office, I ventured to say something to him of your Grace's resolves of that day: his reply in effect was, that you had put the matter beyond deliberation. I found he did not expect you would have writ to the King till it had been further considered, as some former letters between you imported; but now he knew not what to say to it, or what was to be done, which made me mention to your Grace that I thought they expected to be advised with as to the manner of your quitting. I saw my Lord Orford since, by whom I understood he had directions from your Grace to speak with my Lord Chamberlain, and that he should write to you when that was done. I hope therefore that will be done this evening, for I suppose my Lord Chamberlain came to town last night. I shall know more of it immediately.

I am not yet prepared to make use of the liberty your Grace allows me, to explain what I could wish for. When the office breaks up I know no place that is not full, except Blancard's, which I am a trustee for, if the King will let the daughter have the benefit of it. My Lord Portland has made me no answer upon it, but I hear he has writ to her that the King would make some provision for her, but has not mentioned it. If it be resolved that it

shall be otherwise disposed of, and they would give it me, I should be contented. But I hear of a multitude of competitors besides Harrington, who thinks he has my Lord Chamberlain's and my Lord Romney's interest.

A secretary of my Lord Portland pretends to it, and Germain labours hard for his brother. After all, I am in doubt how I can appear for it, while there is this shew of a trust. If I could be thrust into a commission, I have heard more of vacancies like to be in the Excise than any where else; and I find Thom Hopkins pretended to this for having been less than a year in the Secretary's office. I must own I know nothing of the business; whether I should ever be master of it, or discharge it well or ill, I am not able to answer, but methinks one might perform in any business all that fool Onslow can do. If I were to have my wish, it would be in the Post Office, but I don't expect to outlive Sir Robert Cotton, and a small thing to me at present is more valuable than large promises in reversion.

The Lords Justices have met, and my Lord Chamberlain was with them: they could do very little to-day, being wholly intent upon despatching Mr. Prior back to Holland, upon the occasion of the ratification of the peace. He knew nothing how that would be ordered, and their Excellencies thought, since it is agreed to be ratified within three weeks from the time of signing, or sooner if it may be, that it would be a great gaining of time, if the

form of the ratification were prepared in Holland and engrossed, and so be sent hither signed by his Majesty, with his warrant to affix the great seal to it. Besides, their Excellencies thought the Plenipotentiaries would know best how this should be drawn, and put it into such terms as were most proper to the occasion, and not be liable to any exceptions that otherwise might be taken; and they believed it so much the less fit to be done here, as they have not yet seen the preamble, but have heard there was some difficulty in settling it. Their Excellencies have therefore dispatched Mr. Prior to make this understood, both to Mr. Blathwayte and the Ambassadors. He is gone this afternoon, the Centurion frigate being ordered to carry him over, and the Lords rise at one o'clock to give time for the letters to be writ. Before I mention what other business was done then, I must take notice of somewhat pretty extraordinary in Mr. Secretary. About ten o'clock Prior came to me and told me the Secretary desired he might have the treaty put into his hands, to bring it to the Lords Justices. I answered downright he should not have it for that purpose; he was sent with it to the Lords Justices, and had already properly delivered it, and I should not part with it till it were laid before their Excellencies, and he might return that or any other answer he pleased to the Secretary. I think he went and told him that he could not find me; if he did so,

I suppose it was in such a manner, that the other understood the meaning of it.

When the Lords were set and the treaty produced, my Lord Chamberlain proposed that Mr. Secretary should be sent for, to be present at the reading it. But all the rest being silent, he was let alone till all that matter was over, and till after Prior was called in and had his orders for returning; and, by the way, I must mention he had two hundred guineas ordered him for his journey.

My Lord Chamberlain then proposing again that Mr. Secretary might be sent for, at least for the Council business, that was consented to; he was then told of the treaty, which he said he had not seen. I don't know whether it was by way of complaint; but I had whispered to my Lord Chancellor before he came, what demand he had made and what answer I had returned, who approved very well of it.

My Lord Chamberlain ordered the shewing it to Mr. Secretary; I thought he would only have looked cursorily upon it there, but he took it away with him. However, I have since got it out of his hands, contrary to his intentions, for their Excellencies had ordered it to be translated, and printed both in Latin and in English, whereupon I acquainted them I should be obliged to fetch the treaty from Mr. Secretary, if their orders were to be obeyed. My Lord Chamberlain said he would not keep it for a quarter of an hour, but I had it not again without

dunning, and till the Council was set; and as soon as they were up Mr. Secretary sent Stanyon for the treaty; but I fairly answered it was in use by their Excellencies' directions, and till it were translated or copied, I could not part with it.

I mention these passages more at large, because I expect at one time or another they will have their consequences, perhaps to my disadvantage, if the gentleman's power be ever equal to his ill will; but where I know that reigns I will never put on a studied complaisance. It will be some satisfaction to me, if he has but reason to hate me, which I must be sure of, if ever I stood in the way of his profits, and I believe all this tugging for the treaty is who shall have the advantage of printing it, which I never dreamt of till Mr. Yard tells me it will be worth 30*l.* or 40*l.* If it be so, we had as good keep it here as send it to the other office, where we have a long score already, and since it is never like to be wiped off. It is as good breaking with something in one's hands, as to pay all and yet never more to be trusted.

Perhaps your Grace will consider some of these passages as not regarding me, only when I see how this gentleman is supported, and his ill using their Excellencies all the summer is overlooked, one may make some conjectures as to further designs, and what I have to add would still increase the suspicions.

This evening my Lord Chamberlain comes to the

office, and sends for me into the inner room. He told me he was writing to your Grace, that he hoped you would recover your health, and not persist in your resolutions; but if those were not be overcome, he remembered what he had told me of my coming into the office, and that he was still of the same mind, and he was confident he should carry it.

I defended myself all I could, and said it was the only thing I should not wish him to succeed in, and if his power went so far, I heartily wished it better employed, for this was the worst choice that ever could be made, and I the most incapable of such a favour; but after all, he was so positive in it, that I can't but believe that he as much intends to push it, as I do to decline it. What are the motives for it, God knows.

Your Grace, that knows more of the workings of the court, will easier see into it. This I must know, that it can be out of no kindness to me, who am so sensible of my unfitness in every respect, that I would beg it as an alms to be left in obscurity, when I think what a figure I must make in the bedchamber, at the councils, and in the parliament house. I had better do as Temple did, fill my pockets with stones and leap overboard under the bridge. The worst in my case is, that though it be no hanging matter to refuse it, yet I apprehend it will be a starving one; and one must be despised and crushed for not complying, though there be never so much honest prudence on one's side. I know not whose assistance

to implore but your Grace's. My Lord Chamberlain tells me he has never spoke of this to any one, and charges me to keep the secret. I must burst if I don't tell it your Grace; you will not let it be exposed, but if it be possible help me. God knows what you are advised to by the letters now sent you. My wishes are, that though your Grace holds your resolutions to serve no more, yet that you would keep them in till the last extremity, and let the seals lie, either till you change climates, if you find that convenient, or till they are sent for, which can be no lessening to you now you have so far declared yourself. I will not say you may have other thoughts in process of time.

But your friends will better know which way to turn themselves,. A corner stone pulled out threatens ruin to the building, and the blessings of the peace will be much allayed if we fall so soon into the change of hands, and if I may mingle myself in the debate, I hope if this interest be not dispersed they will find out one that may not be altogether unworthy to succeed you. God inspire their councils and double their assistances.

As to other matters, Roberts was brought to town last night in a night gown, and his clothes are following him; he would have been examined to-day but for the above-mentioned business; he will be brought to-morrow. I hope they will come down right to the point with him, whether he saw your Grace and Sir John Fenwick together at Cardigan

House, or any other place, or what he has said tending towards it.

Mr. Montague was here this evening, and desires my Lord Manchester may bear date from the intimation given him to begin his journey, and he undertakes to satisfy the King about it, if it be mentioned at the Treasury, and therefore I send the certificate for my Lord and Mr. Stanyon, with blanks to be filled as your Grace thinks fit.

I send your Grace a copy of what was minuted at the treaty in behalf of the late Queen, though it be no part of the articles.

I enclose likewise an intercepted letter that Monsieur Cailland sent over last post.

I have been called on to consider with Mr. Yard the translation of the treaty, which has so *dozed* me, it being now late, that if I had more to say I have forgot it, and must reserve it to next post.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

18th of September, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 15th. As for Monsieur Cailland, Mr. Blathwayte has signified the King's pleasure to the Treasury, for his pension to be paid; and it is not long since I spoke to Mr. Montague, who promised it should be done.

I have looked into my minute book and find both your Grace and my Lord Godolphin were with the Lords Justices on the 2d of June 1696, but that is now of no consequence; for Roberts being examined yesterday, gave no cause to believe that this calumny upon your Grace came from him. The substance of his answer was (by which likewise the questions asked him will be understood) that he knew Gibbs,* that he saw him about six weeks since at Dover; that he dunned for some money he owed him for a perriwig, &c.; that he brought a young gentleman down with him, who he said designed courtship to Mr. Masters' daughter. That he don't know the gentleman's name, nor should he know him again if he met him; that the gentleman was inquisitive about the castle, and desired Roberts to shew it him, but he declined it, but denies any discourse about seizing it; he said he was asked how many forts there were, and in what condition, but he answered he did not know them and still persisted: there are some of the forts he never was in, as Sandown and Sandgate.

My Lord Chancellor asked Roberts what discourse he had with that gentleman concerning your Grace. He answered, that while they were together he did not so much as hear the Duke of Shrewsbury's name mentioned, nor was there any occasion for it. He was then asked what discourse he had with that person about Sir John Fenwick. He said

* The wig-maker.

the gentleman began a discourse about his sufferings, and that he had been abused on the account of Sir John Fenwick. He added, that for his part he never saw Sir John Fenwick in his life, knowing him to be Sir John Fenwick.

This is what I could take of his examination, and I think nothing material is omitted. The man was very weak with sickness, and not fit to be held in long discourse; and to have asked particulars, when in general he denied any mention had been made of your Grace's name, would have been to no purpose.

Mr. Attorney attending yesterday had all Price's informations put into his hands to consider what he thinks fit to be done upon them. Their Excellencies finding nothing more remaining, but only to let the Earl of Yarmouth know what is laid to his charge, I am to give him notice near the time that their Excellencies would speak with him on Tuesday. As for Mr. Bridgeman, I am ordered to acquaint him what his part is. Upon the whole, all I can make of the matter is, that Waugh had magnified to Roberts his stratagem of procuring a pass under the disguise of a post warrant, that Roberts had talked of it to Gibbs, and Gibbs to Mrs. Scott, all making their own addition, as is usual when things pass from hand to hand. From Mrs. Scott it comes to Price, and he circulates it back again to Gibbs and Roberts for a fuller information, and therefore it is but an improved lie, and nonsense in

the contrivance; it is only fit to be despised and laughed at.

I don't know how others would have let themselves in hereafter to have supported this fiction; but I can't see at present who are engaged in it. If Robins be not gone into the country upon lawful occasions, I rather suspect he is in with Chaloner at his secret of counterfeiting exchequer bills; that enquiry rests at present.

The Warden of the Mint has attended these two days with some further information against Chaloner, as to former coining, which will bring it more home to him; but the Lords were not at leisure to hear it; he will, however, attend on Tuesday, and I hope some directions will be given for searching into the bottom of that rogue's practices, whom the Treasury ought to use all means to detect, and render him incapable of doing more mischief.

Sir Harry Colt was with me yesterday, to tell me he hopes Price had done him right, and that he has owned what injunctions he always laid upon him to tell nothing but what was truth, and not to think of bringing any innocent man under suspicion by his discoveries.

He likewise said that Mrs. Bernard had been at work, as was directed, to get a pass from Bernard of the office for one he should know was going for France; that they were now in treaty about it, they had offered him ten guineas, and he stood upon eleven. Sir Harry had a scruple whether he should

lay down the money now the peace is concluded. I thought it a very reasonable one, and much question whether any one has it in his thoughts to give such a sum for going to France, when in a few days he may go for nothing, and the shortest way.

I was very glad to have a hint from my Lord Orford yesterday, that if they must have the misfortune to see your Grace out of business, they should all wish and endeavour that my Lord Wharton might succeed you. They hoped he would put in for it, and those perhaps who might not like it, would not know how to oppose it; this very much rejoices me on many accounts. I shall be glad to see friends united and stick one by another. I shall be glad to see places disposed of to proper persons, and those kept out who neither desire nor deserve them. I can't doubt of your Grace's concurrence with them in the latter part at least, and if you do no more, you will give them at least time that is necessary for taking such measures as will be beneficial for the public, as well as tending to their own preservation.

Mr. Jones was with me this morning, and shewed me a letter he had from Brown of Wednesday was se'nnight. He told him he was then going forty miles off, and could not tell when or if ever he should hear more of him. If he keeps to the latter, there will then be no great harm in it.

Mr. Yard sends your Grace a parcel of the articles. I have only further to acquaint you, that I have writ

to Colonel Mordaunt about releasing the St. Maloe's boat.

The Lords Justices have sent over their reasons for proroguing rather than adjourning, which turn upon the obstruction of the by-privileges, and the conveniency of letting some bills drop that will otherwise be depending; they are sent to the King with an intimation that their Excellencies concur with them. We are grown very indifferent as to this parliament, their behaviour having been very odd in some things; and will be more so, if they shew an unwillingness to the confirming the articles of Limerick, because of the clause being left out, as it was expected some would do on Monday last.

There is a proviso come over to serve my Lord of Upper Ossory, and there is another for the Lord Louth.

We had an Irish post this day, for which I refer to the enclosed extract of the letters.

The council is summoned to meet on Tuesday to consider the Irish bills.

Legate, the messenger who has Roberts in custody, was with me this evening, and tells me Roberts has been talking to him of the matters he was examined about. He still keeps to the same relation as to his refusing to go with Price to the castle, or that ever he saw Sir John Fenwick, knowing who he was. As to your Grace, he varies a little, saying that, in his discourse about his sufferings, he told Price he had been brought before your Grace and

examined, and that you used him cruelly. It seems Gibbs was not by while they talked together, but was gone to look after his horse, so that it is but one's affirming and the other denying, and either of them may say anything, but the fact itself can't lie.

Price sent me a paper yesterday that was laid before the Lords Justices. It was for his liberty, and having some support, since he could not so well provide for his family. I have sent it to Mr. Attorney as I was ordered, who is now to determine upon all that relates to this fellow. I suppose this is a precaution against anything he may be contriving for the winter.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 21st, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 18th, and am very sensible of your Grace's goodness in reconsidering Mr. Yard's business. I have sent your letter to Mr. Onslow's house, he being out of town. If an inspection had been made into the letters here, and nothing had been found, as I believe that would be the case, that would not have removed people's prejudices, they would only say the peace had altered the manner of correspondence, and it is not every post one is furnished with disaffected news. I believe your Grace might be satisfied in this matter as to your own particular.

If I had your orders to tell Mr. Yard that notice is given you from the north of his correspondence with papists, and that you would have an account in what manner he has writ to them, upon so sudden a question he could not answer indirectly without confirming the suspicions, if there be any ground for them. The only inconvenience to be apprehended by it is, that he would totally forbear that correspondence, and then the complaint would be turned another way, and the same informers might say that those who disserve the government, and are unfaithful in their trusts, instead of being detected and censured, are only instructed how to be more cautious and keep themselves undiscovered.

As to the informers, I can have no more to say by this post, unless my Lord Yarmouth gives any occasion when he shall attend the Lords Justices this morning. I have spoke to Mr. Bridgeman, and have his answer in writing, who says they have nothing of Mrs. Lovings;* but one Mrs. Napier, whom they had long known, had left a trunk with them before the King came up from the west. Whether she is or has been in France, they don't know, but last year they remitted her 20*l.* by Mrs. Scott, understanding she was then at Bruges, and her receipt for the money was dated from Bruges.

Mr. Bridgeman told me he knew this matter two months ago, when I answered that I supposed he had it from the same hands that brought it to their

* So written in this place. Elsewhere, Mrs. Louvain or Mrs. Louvin.

Excellencies. He owned Sir Harry Colt acquainted him with it as a matter that he thought was a practice upon him to worm him out of those goods. That Mr. Gay should know all that has passed I don't much wonder, for my Lord Romney conceals nothing from him, but I don't find that other people are much informed in particulars (if they were, I see no danger in it), but Mr. Bridgeman tells me he was named in good company, so I suppose he has that from Sir Harry too, who makes a double use of his informations, to prejudice people one way, and make his court to them another.

My Lord Wharton came to town yesterday at the summons of my Lord Chamberlain,* as he is pleased to tell me; he had seen my Lord Orford, and so was a little prepared for the business. He thought there would be a meeting this afternoon between himself, Lord Chancellor, Lord Orford, and my Lord Chamberlain. I thought myself a little concerned to talk with him about your Grace's successor, if your resolutions held. Whether he would be open enough with me I can't tell, but he seemed very little to affect that office if the King should be brought to incline to it, which he much doubted, however he would not opiniatre anything against his friends. I could not forbear telling him my thoughts, that whether he cared for the office or not, it could not be indifferent to them whether they had one of their

* Who did his best, by every public conversation, to make Wharton believe him his sincere friend, while, in truth, he was labouring in every way to exclude him from office.

friends in that post, and the way to secure it would be, if his Lordship shewed a willingness to accept it himself, and it would be much easier afterwards to introduce whom they could agree on by way of compromise, and I hoped they would not only pitch upon one they could confide in, but that they would take care he were a person of substance and quality, who might be of some use in his station. He agreed this to be right, and he should be for it. I find both he and my Lord Orford are dissatisfied that Sir William Trumbull should be First Secretary; whether the removing him will be proposed, I know not, but some have talked as if he were intended for the residing ambassador at Paris, after the compliments are over. I don't wonder my Lord Chamberlain has mentioned nothing to your Grace of what he said to me; for if ever that be done, I make no doubt but it would be by surprise,* as an act immediately proceeding from the King, on a sudden thought, and with an intention to satisfy people; it might be undone again, as new measures shall be taken.

My Lord Wharton, I perceive, designs your Grace a visit about the beginning of next week, and then you will know all the resolutions taken. You will give me leave to beg of you not to mention to him or any one else what I have writ about my Lord Chamberlain. I may expect one time or

* These words were fully justified by the result, and showed the political sagacity of the man.

another to have questions asked me about it, and it will concern me very much to be able to deny it with good assurance, which I shall not know how to put on if I am in doubt whether this has gone farther than your Grace, and so may have taken wind.

Old Charlton was with me this morning, and began with questions, who he should apply himself to of the Lords Justices, for perfecting something the King had left undone. But what I could gather from his obscure way of talking, it was for the receiving of 400*l.* or 500*l.* he had disbursed by the King's orders, for God knows what. I said, if it were a money business, since he had had patience so long, he had as good stay for the King's return, which might now be soon expected. But he said it would admit of no delay. Then he began to rail at Mr. Arden for misrepresenting things to your Grace about their pitts, that they were left to open to other people's prejudice. He said, he had been down upon the place, and found there was no such thing, and was very scurrilous upon Mr. Arden for opposing his interest in the country, with reflection upon other of your servants, which I thought very indecent, and therefore I let him know so much, and the rather that I might put him upon shewing his humour, and what he would be at, when contradicted. He grew testy upon it, and said, now we had a peace, we thought that would secure all, but might be mistaken in it, and if that were the consi-

deration I had for him and his former civilities, in acquitting himself so like a gentleman as he had done, he should say no more to me, and so departed with your humble servant on both sides. I think his open defiances are less to be feared than his underhand dealing, though I have given him no offence, but in endeavouring to vindicate a family to which I belong; and if he shall endeavour to make a noise of that, perhaps I may expose him, as much as he can me, and his hugging plots, in order to compass Mrs. Russell, will shew the temper of the gentleman. If he has met with his friend Colt, as he talked of, I suppose it is concerted between them, that this is the time to begin their menaces, in order to the obtaining their extravagant wishes.

The Lords Justices have met, but did not sit long, my Lord Chancellor not coming to-day. He has been out of order this day or two, and now he took physick. The Earl of Yarmouth, however, was called on. My Lord Archbishop acquainted him with the occasion of it, to which he made a cunning answer. He owned a young man had been with him, whose name he did not know, pretending he brought him messages from France. The reason he gave for his admitting him was, that if he had any thing of consequence to impart, he might make use of it for the government, as he had done on other occasions, either by communicating it to my Lord Portland, or some of the Lords then present, and appealed to my Lord of Canterbury

and Lord Chamberlain, whether he had been wanting in that part.

But he found nothing in this man that was worth repeating again, and therefore resolved to have no more to do with him, and refused to give him a letter for France, which he earnestly pressed for. He added, that he has heard his character since, and finds he has been a clipper, a coiner, a counterfeiter, and forger of bills and notes, and every thing else that is infamous; and further, that he had been a servant to that Smith who was before the Lords. I believe, in that he might be misinformed; the mistake might be for one Smith who was a clerk in the office of Orphans, whom Price inveigled to steal the tickets out of the books. This enquiry is like to go no further with the Lords, at least till Mr. Attorney makes his report upon the informations put into his hands, which will be on Thursday.

Mr. Price sent me a pert letter this day, and would fain know why he is longer confined; and if it is to continue, he desires that part of the great charge he has been at in the service of the government may be reimbursed him for the support of his family. This was shewn to the Lords, Mr. Attorney being by, but there is no order yet given in it; if there shall be, I suppose he will be turned over to Mr. Baker.

Sir Harry Colt came again to-day, and told the Lords that Mrs. Scott was capitulating with him. She offered to come in provided bail may be taken

for her appearance afterwards, to prevent her being sent to gaol. This is likewise reserved to be considered on Thursday, when my Lord Chancellor shall be present, by reason of whose indisposition it was resolved to let the Irish bills alone till the same day. So that all they did at Council was to hear a complaint of the Dutch Ambassador against a bailiff for coming into his house and arresting a man there, who, I think, is an English tailor. The bailiff is ordered to be taken into custody, and will be prosecuted for it to the utmost. I saw my Lord Wharton when the Council rose, who told me there was to be a meeting this evening at my Lord Chancellor's.

What the Irish post brought yesterday, your Grace will see in the enclosed extract. The motion for preparing heads for a Bill of Rights, was made by the Lord Abercorn. The House was thin, and the Bishops predominant, and therefore it was thought necessary to summon the other Lords to attend. The Chancellor is fallen under the displeasure of the high churchmen there, and they will remove him if they can. They will hardly find another who will serve with greater care, or understand his business so well.

I hear, too, he performs a part which I most suspected him for; and that he lives in great plenty and splendour, and has the most and best company resort to him. He is out of order, with a kind of rheumatism, which often follows upon great fatigues.

The Lords Justices intend the Parliament shall be prorogued for three weeks only, viz., to the 21st of October, unless the King send other directions in the meantime.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 23, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 20th, but in a condition I was sorry to see it in. I send the cover just as it came to me, with Mr. Manly's letter that I enclosed. This was a letter very unfit for them or any body else to see, but how far their curiosity has gone I am not able to say; and I think it best not to be very inquisitive after it, lest that might make them consider it over again.

I have sent the enclosed to my Lord Manchester's lodgings; he is out of town at present, but is expected to-night or to morrow. He now thinks of going about the beginning of next week.

I have acquainted my Lord Chancellor, Lord Chamberlain, and Lord Orford, that they would have their letters answered to-morrow. My Lord Chamberlain is most in haste for it; he called at the office both on Monday and yesterday. He seems very well pleased that there is hope of seeing you here. Your Grace has said so much to him these two years passed, of your being weary of the employ-

ment of Secretary, that he has no expectations you will hold it, especially if you do not find you have a measure of health to continue in town this winter. He lays it down for a foundation, that you will not satisfy yourself in keeping this employment if it must be unexecuted for six months longer; but still hopes you will accept some other post in the government, that the King may have the benefit of your service, while he eases you of what you think an ungrateful fatigue.

I can't but think he advises very well for the King's service to retain you in it, by whatever handle you will give way to. This does not, however, agree with the scheme your Grace proposes to yourself of a total retirement, which is a resolution I hope will admit of second thoughts, especially if the recovery of your health be not very doubtful, that being the only reason, if I may presume to say so, of all that you assign for quitting, which ought to be allowed of.

An aversion to attendance in a busy employment should not be alleged by those who have particular talents for promoting the good of their country, and have the merit and good fortune to be highly acceptable both to prince and people; and for the restlessness of those who wish you out of business, I am sure they very little deserve to be gratified. The best and safest way of dealing with them is to despise their malice, professedly to oppose their designs, and overcome one's own indifference to business, rather

than give way to the desperate activity of some people.

In these cases one would stand like a dam to keep out an inundation of ill practices, where it is the interest of one's country and of all honest men to back and support one. I thank God that has not failed your Grace hitherto, and I am confident never will. If there be any small remainder of this kind of attempts it will fall at your feet, and a very little time will make you as easy at court as you can be in the country.

Your Grace has hitherto lived in a storm, and served in the most exposed employment in a hazardous war; you ought, therefore, likewise to make a trial in peace, and either enjoy the fruits of it, or take up these resolutions when there is no hope remaining that the world will grow better.

I may forbear troubling your grace with my concerns till such time as I have the happiness of seeing you here; therefore I shall only say that as Blancard's place* is the most modest demand, so I believe it will be the easiest obtained, and perhaps, upon the whole matter, to be the most desirable; since it will be a moderate competent addition to my small fortune, and besides give me an opportunity to provide for a young relation, by entrusting him with the execution of it.

I hear my Lord Portland has writ to Monsieur d'Alonne, that the King would give Mrs. Blancard

* A colonial post.

a pension of 200*l.* per annum, and 1,000*l.* for a portion when she married. So I am satisfied this employment is not designed for her, and since my pretensions are allowable as anothers, I have this to say, that I have a warrant for it under the King's hand; that I have lost a more valuable office by the peace; that we have had idle winters and very busy summers, but not profitable. But the most weighty reason will be your Grace's recommendation, which prevailed for Mr. Barber, as being made by one who was entrusted with that province. I do apprehend the objection your Grace makes, that if I put in for the excise, it may be looked upon as if I only minded my own profit, and declined serving in the way the King would have me, and that may provoke them to deny both; whereas by a shew of continuing on, one might hope to be repaired for the prize office.

As to the grand affair, that will be at a stand till your Grace arrives, and then you will keep it if you would pleasure the best part of mankind, or else think of disposing of it better than hitherto has been done. I should be very unfortunate if your Grace should go over to my Lord Chamberlain's notions, but I trust your judgment and goodness will preserve me. I am pretty well persuaded that my Lord Wharton is principally to be kept out, but rather than he should take it ill, he may have so much the greater hand in making any other. His Lordship went out of town yesterday, to be at

the choosing a mayor at Wycombe this day. I don't find, if there has been a conference, that particulars have been treated of.

I spoke to Sir Harry Colt in the manner your Grace directed. I believe he took it well, for he bowed as if he did. He came to the Lords to-day to know their pleasure about Mrs. Scott's being bailed; but my Lord Chancellor said it had not been their way to capitulate with people under accusations. So that is fallen.

Mr. Attorney and Mr. Solicitor attended to-day, and delivered their opinions upon the informations. They found there was but a single witness throughout, and one whose credit they thought they could not support. He appearing to have been in at every thing that was ill; besides they found nothing but words, and nothing but the seizing of Dover looked like an overt act; in short, they saw no ground for any prosecution upon this man's testimony, and though some had owned part of what they were charged with, yet it varied too, and might be retracted. So the papers are again restored to me, and an extract is to be drawn out of what Price and Chaloner say of one another to be sent to the Treasury. As to Price's liberty, Mr. Attorney is of opinion he should not have it but upon bail, which he has notice of. To day he sent me a letter that he had laid out 300*l.* in the service of the government, and that six months he had employed therein was 500*l.* loss to him. It came before the

Lords rose, so they saw his way of reckoning, but would give no orders for the payment of it.

Perhaps this may be the winter's farce, if it be so I am sure it will do your Grace more good than hurt.

I had an opportunity to tell the Lords what Roberts had said to Legate. My Lord Chancellor does not think it worth while to hear any of them over again, and it might look a little affected. I told him likewise about Bernard; but since Sir Harry had already answered himself, he thought it as well not raise his busy humour.

I had prepared a letter for the governors in the West Indies some days since; this day I shewed it to my Lord Chancellor, who approving thereof, I send your Grace some copies, which if you please to put your name only, we will fill up the rest, and direct them to such as my Lord Bellamont shall advise, who will not be going till next week.

The Lords Justices have had under consideration the new bill of outlawries from Ireland; the method of it is not liked, but for some considerations it was intended to be passed, and I was directed to acquaint the Lords Justices of Ireland that was to be practised no more. However, I think the council will not go over it so easily; they sat a good while, but made little progress in the bill.

I can't learn particulars, but my Lord Chancellor sent to me not to write to Ireland, as they had directed. I hear Mr. Solicitor declares downright

that this is an evading of Poining's act; they say that some expedient is to be found out by Tuesday next, when the council meet again.

It is certain if the grandees were out of the case, this bill would lie here as the other does in Ireland.

I enclose the extract of Irish news that came yesterday; the Chancellor tells me his illness continues so long, that he is in doubt whether he shall be ever well again.

I acquainted your Grace last post with the odd behaviour of old Charlton, but because I don't love to leave a fool in his folly till it grows upon him, I sent my wife to-day with a civil expostulation to his daughter-in-law, who will endeavour to bring him into better temper. But at present he is rambled to Tunbridge to vent his spleen and his love.

Mr. Mackye has got Mr. Johnson to move your Grace for your recommending him to the postmasters for the agency of the pacquet boats at Dover. He does not expect now to be any charge to your Grace, the care about passes ceasing.

I hope it will do the same as to the correspondents, they being all paid by advance. Bobins' oracle has ceased ever since he was asked for the original.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 25th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 22d, and immediately delivered the three enclosed to the Lords. My Lord Chamberlain coming first to the office, had his letter before the others. I believe it answered his expectation, for he came out to shew it me, and afterwards did the same to the two other Lords. I question whether they answered it in the same confiding manner. But in the evening, again my Lord Chamberlain told me they had been conferring upon their letters, and he found your Grace had writ yet more positively to the other two lords of your intentions and desires to lay down. They were very glad, however, you had complied with them in coming up, that the resigning might have all its graces towards the King, and that you might know one another's minds as to what was to be done next. He concluded that he still remembered what he had said to me, and to that he admits of no answer. My only hope, therefore, is, that your Grace is likewise pleased to remember what I have said to you. With great submission I must add, that there are infinite more reasons for my not coming in, than there are for your Grace's laying down, even the impairment of health included, in opposition to which I shall only offer to your Grace's consideration, whether it be fit or tolerable to propose a man

to be a Secretary of State, that in a very short time will not have a tooth left in his head. It is to no purpose to disguise one's deformities, the thing shews itself, and the scurvy has so far prevailed. If more reasons were necessary, your Grace knows them all.

My Lord Chamberlain told me, there was one thing I must do for him. He said it was he knew not how it got into people's mouths that your Grace would certainly lay down, and as they will be guessing what shall come next, he found it reported as if he were designed to be Secretary of State and President of the Council, which he would have strongly contradicted, there being nothing more false, and that he is the last man in England who would accept of either of those employments. He knew very well of what consequence it must be to meddle with them, he opposed as long as it was possible his coming into any place at all; but when the King would have it, he took one that was next to none, and for his embarking further to expose himself as a mark to be shot at, no considerations should ever make him do it.

Upon this discourse and some other observations, I think I understood what sort of Secretary of State is intended as most suitable to our constitution and the present model of the court. He must be such an one as has more of the buckler in him than the sword, soft and stubborn* within, where it is to be held, and yet so framed, as to receive all blows given

* So written in the manuscript.

from without; it is no matter how that is mauled provided those stand secure who are behind it.

Parliaments are grown into a habit of finding fault, and some Jonah or another must be thrown overboard, if the storm cannot otherwise be laid. But if the great Leviathan will be amused by an empty barrel, it is a composition easily made. Little men are certainly the properest for these purposes; and if, like Pharoah, they are raised to that end, and know the conditions they come in upon, they will have no great reason to complain.

According to this scheme one may solve some phænomena, and give the reasons why my Lord Wharton would not be liked. It may be apprehended he would do as they say my Lord Shaftesbury once did, when the Parliament was in an impeaching humour, he saved himself and gave them a new object.

I know not whether I may be thought to have given any proof of myself that I am a fit person to be baited, and so am chosen for my patience, as one that would be less troublesome to others, and whom they may be less troubled for. So far they are in the right, that I have a great contempt for the Arnolds, Colts, and all that would rise by accusations, and should have a stubbornness not to give way to them. It would be my humour rather to turn them out of what they have, than be helping them to more, by the methods they would attain to it. It is very probable they would make quick work with

such an one, nor would that dismay me, if I had but a competency to retire to; but my business is to know how to live, and not to be great.

My Lord Chamberlain bid me tell your Grace, that he should not answer your letter till the foreign mails were arrived, and he could make a guess at the time the King would be here, and then he would desire your coming up three or four days before the King's arrival. It may not be fit to expose your Grace to a relapse by lodging in town, and my Lord Chamberlain thinks you may be as conveniently at one of the Chelseas, or where you like better, either at or near Kensington.

The Lords Justices had yesterday under consideration the objections made at council to the Irish Bill of Outlawries, the council were not all of an opinion, but most thought it a plain evading of Poining's Act, and to consider whether the former bill may not yet pass, by the help of a supplemental bill for remedying the inconveniences in it, as was once intended by the House of Commons, or what other expedient they will propose for preserving the bill. I fancy it is now in danger of being lost; they say the generality of the House of Lords in Ireland have no mind to it any way.

I think we are never to have done with Sir Harry Colt. He came yesterday again with a letter from Price, wherein he desired to be called before the Lords Justices in a matter of great consequence. He was therefore sent for, and acquainted the Lords

that his wife had been with Chaloner by Sir Harry's approbation, by whom Chaloner sent Price word that they were both taken up on politic accounts, and not for any crimes they could lay to either of their charge. That the Warden of the Mint had examined him about Price, but he had justified him in every thing; and he desired to know what Price had said of him; and if Price would be ruled by him, he had a way to bring them both off in spite of the government.

The Lords told him he would do well to know from Chaloner, what the way was he would take; and to that end they permitted him to write to Chaloner, provided he was careful to communicate his answer, which he was ordered to send to me; but I have not heard from him since.

There being no occasion now for the council to meet on Tuesday upon the Irish bills, they meeting yesterday to approve of the proclamation about Antonio, the Portuguese, it was then resolved that the Parliament should be prorogued to the 21st of October.

Mariot, the tailor, who is named in the proclamation, was taken last night coming out of the country to his house in Arundel Street. I hear he owns that he carried one of the counterfeit bills to Mr. Mariot, who succeeded Burton in Thom Howard's office, and there it was endorsed for a ready money payment, though it were not yet due in course.

That Mariot belonging to the Teller's office, was taken up on Thursday, and committed to Newgate.

I thought we might have had the Dutch mails by this time, the wind having been tolerably fair since yesterday morning.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 28th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 25th. Since you submit to the importunities for your coming to town, I have acquainted you that my Lord Chamberlain will give you notice when he thinks it may be a proper time. I perceive it will not be very soon, there being no mention yet made by any of the four posts lately arrived, when the King intends to be here; but my Lord Portland is expected every day, and I suppose he will be back again before the King comes over.

One of his businesses, I suppose, must be to provide money for sending home the foreign troops in the King's pay, which he is intent upon; and they talk as if 300,000*l.* were borrowed at Amsterdam for that purpose. The King has sent for transport ships to be despatched from hence for Willemstadt, ready fitted with provisions and accommodations for bringing over one thousand horses and their riders, which vessels are to be hired by the month, that they

may go backward and forward. There will be other vessels likewise taken up in Holland for the quicker despatch in bringing over the forces, which Mr. Clark is considering how to dispose of into quarters, and the Treasury how to subsist them. The counties will be well crowded with them, and press their members to make haste to disband them.*

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The messengers were sent away about ten the same night, with all their despatches: they must go first to Loo, to get the King's hand to the ratification before it can be exchanged. Mr. Prior† landed in Holland the 18th (o. s.), but they would not, upon his arrival, alter the methods they had taken; on the contrary, they blame him for his haste in coming hither with an incomplete copy of the treaty. It was expected he should first have waited on the King, and received his directions what was to be done next.

The King had only an account, by letter, on Saturday, that the treaty was signed; but my Lord Jersey came on Sunday to Loo, and informed him of the manner of it.

We had the fourth post yesterday: these posts bring accounts of notable successes on the confede-

* I have retained thus much of the letter, as it shews how soon the course that Parliament would take was foreseen, but I have omitted part of what follows, referring merely to engrossing the treaty, messengers, &c.

† I have retained all that refers to Prior, from the general feeling of interest in the poet.

rates' side. The Turks are totally defeated by Prince Eugene. The Tartar routed a second time by the Muscovites, and the Elector of Saxony quietly crowned. The particulars are in the Gazette and the printed paper that came out since. Perhaps Mr. Yard may have other particulars.

We are the only unfortunate people whom ill luck still pursues. Your Grace will see by the advices from Brest, which is likewise confirmed by a ship arrived in Ireland, that Captain Norris is blocked up in Newfoundland by Nesmond's squadron, and in danger of being starved or taken, for want of his provisions that have lain here so long. Your Grace long since foresaw that some mischief would befall us there. When we consider all our circumstances, there never came a peace so seasonably to any people. I wish we may preserve it under the disreputation we shall incur for scandalous carelessness and mismanagement. We hear nothing how they intend to dispose of King James. They talk of repairing the castles at Blois and Chambord, as if he were to retire no further, and the Jacobites encourage one another as if their game were not yet lost. The Imperialists shew no forwardness to conclude unless Strasbourg be delivered to them; and there is a good deal of huffing at Ryswick between the French and them. The mediator has enough to do to bring them into temper again; and the French tax him with a partiality to the Germans.

Sir Joseph Williamson says they will however

come to at last. They have agreed to a cessation of arms, but the manner of keeping it has been that Prince Lewis took the castle of Eberenburg with the notification of it in his pocket; he says he received it not till two hours after the place was surrendered. We are the only people that have let our joy break out upon the first news of signing the peace; there has been no such demonstrations of it either in France or Holland.

I humbly acknowledge your Grace's favour, and accept the offer of your assisting me in the grant of Blancard's place, if it may be obtained, and is not reserved for a foreigner under a borrowed name. I think it as attainable as any thing I can propose, and since it would set me at ease, it is all I ought to wish.

I suppose your Grace, ere this, will have seen my Lord Wharton, and have understood both his mind and the minds of others. If he should have any thoughts for the Secretary's place, I believe it would be on condition only that he were satisfied with his colleague, or if there were no other way of keeping out those he and his friends should have a dislike to, I have been thinking who might be probable men for these employments; those that occur to me are Lord Lexington and the Earl of Jersey.* The former having been much abroad, and kept long at Vienna contrary to his inclinations, methinks might expect such an offer to be made him; and my Lord

* Formerly Lord Villiers.

Jersey, who has just concluded such a treaty where he seems to be most intrusted with the secrets, and has gained great esteem and intimacy with the Dutch ministry, should therefore be particularly recommendable. I suppose too, it would be more agreeable to him than his employment in Ireland, which must have an inconvenience in it by carrying thither a Roman Catholic lady. I know not how either of these would be liked by others, but I happened to mention the last to my Lord Chancellor, as one I thought might be a fit man, but I found him totally averse to it.

I know not what to desire of your Grace, whether I should trouble you for your recommendation while the King is abroad, or whether the matter will so well admit of a delay till his arrival, especially now it is like to be deferred. Your Grace must please to help me out of this difficulty. You have now a letter from the King, which, I suppose, will require your writing to him, and perhaps give an occasion for making your desires further known, that you may have his leave to resign. If your Grace thinks proper to mention me as one that will be destitute, and may be provided for in that manner, it would most effectually do my business; but I entirely submit it, whether your Grace may think it proper to bring me into a letter of yours to the King, or whether it will be sufficient that you employ Mr. Blathwayte in it, who, I presume, will be friendly. He helped me into the prize-office, and I hope

would be as ready to assist me in obtaining a recompense for the loss of it.

The great reason that makes me wish the King may be moved before he comes over is, that my Lord Chamberlain having this impracticable notion in his thoughts, might oppose my reasonable pretensions upon the first hearing them, and then I shall be left between two stools; and if it be deferred till your Grace's coming to town, and he then should propose what he intends for me, he would more wonder that your Grace should concern yourself in recommending me to any thing else. But your Grace will judge of all these things better than I can, and whatever way you shall please to take will satisfy and oblige me.

The Lords Justices met this day, but my Lord Chancellor was not with them, having taken physic. The Treasury was sent for, that several things might be recommended to them.*

* * * * *

Mr. Blathwayte's letters of the 3rd were read, by which his Majesty approves that the Parliament of Ireland may be prorogued.

It is recommended to their Excellencies to take care the Scotch company do not settle in the Isthmus of Darien, for which they are preparing steps at Hamburgh, some of them were already sailed. Their Excellencies have hereupon resolved

* I have left out the specification of the recommendations to the treasury, which concerned solely the provision of means for paying off the foreign troops, for transporting and subsisting the British army, and paying off ships no longer needed.

to speak with the Scotch Secretary on Thursday, to know what countenance is given them from Scotland, to do any thing prejudicial to the treaties with Spain. If there be no other way, I believe the Lords will incline to be a little brisk with their ships.

The Admiralty have not yet made their proposal about the number of ships they think necessary to be kept up, but I find they do not intend it less than eighty.*

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MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

September 30th, 1697.

The people are now in much better humour, and relish the peace more than they will do a year hence, when they shall find taxes in a good measure continued, troops lying heavier upon them, as being in greater numbers dispersed about the country, and that there will not be so quick a consumption for their goods, nor can cattle bear so high a price as in time of war. I should think this the likeliest time to get rid of most of the non-associations, and I suppose the boroughs and cities would take some care to send those who should not abridge the freedom of their choice, and restrain it only to landed men. Besides, this Parliament is almost jaded with giving, and may think of recommending

* A part left out referring to no matter of any interest.

themselves to future elections by holding their hands. I do not know whether the 25th of March next be not the day prefixed by law for their dissolution. If so, they must make more dispatch than they are used to do, to get their business over by that time, and those who have a mind to defeat the supplies, know very well how to protract time, and to divert the House from that which is of most consequence.

* * * * *

Our two rogues, Price and Chaloner, have been managing a correspondence with one another; Chaloner began it by sending for Price's wife, who had Sir Harry's approbation for going to him. Chaloner told her he was now satisfied they were taken up for political reasons, and not for any crimes either of them could be charged with. He did not doubt but it was aimed at that they should be brought to accuse one another, and therefore he had been examined by the government as to Price, but he had vindicated him throughout, and he hoped he had done him the same right, and if Price would be ruled by him, he knew a way to bring them both off in spite of the government. Upon this message and a letter of Chaloner's to confirm it, Price employed Sir Harry Colt to move the Lords Justices, that he might be sent for upon a matter of great moment, which was consented to, and the Lords being acquainted with it, permitted him to write to Chaloner to draw from him the secret, as your Grace has been already informed, and he

would not press for his liberty till that were over. He has had two letters from Chaloner since, but in neither of them has he yet explained himself. In the first of them he says, only that it was plain all discoveries were to be discouraged, and even Pendergrass* was kept some months in irons.

In the discourses to Price's wife, he said there were people of quality who encouraged him to hold it out, and that he had frequent messages from Sir Harry Colt to let him know all would end well, and that he might rely upon his assistance. I am apt to believe this latter part may be a stretch of his own, and that if he has received any messages, they come from Robins, who no doubt has a concern to preserve Chaloner, besides the use that some other good-natured people would make of him. Chaloner in his last letter suspects Price has discovered him, and would have his letters delivered back to him before he will tell him any thing more. But I shall prevent his being gratified therein, who have his letters in my custody, and a copy of the discourse with Price's wife.

These matters will be laid before the Lords this day, for their further directions. I make no question but these rascals will piece it up again, if Chaloner's crimes do not cut him short.

* A Roman Catholic officer, who was among the first to reveal the plot for assassinating William.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 5th, 1697.

The Treasury were with the Lords upon a scheme they have for bringing down the price of Lewis-d'ors to their intrinsic value, which is 17*s.* 4½*d.*, as foreseeing they will otherwise be poured into upon us from France, and carry away the milled money in exchange for them. They mentioned the necessity there was of preventing the mischiefs that might be feared from Chaloner in counterfeiting both the coin and bills, and desired to know whether the warrant granted for a pardon should secure him against a prosecution. The proofs they had against him since that warrant would amount only to misdemeanor, but they could convict him of treason if the warrant did not interpose. My Lord Chancellor thought he ought to be tried both for misdemeanor and treason, and to begin with the first, by which it appearing that he had continued in his ill practices since mercy was extended, the world would find him the less deserving the benefit of it, when the more notorious facts should come to be laid open. I believe his prosecution will not be delayed beyond this next session.

The Dutch post is now arrived. I don't doubt but my Lord Jersey informs your Grace what passed on Friday in admitting the provisional ratification under the Signet, till that under the Great Seal was arrived, which was then in Holland but travelling

first to Loo, and that no exception was taken to the King's putting France into his titles, though Mr. Blathwayte apprehended it by what Prior had writ to him a letter before, and sent us over directions to search all the precedents of former and latter times; but I believe it has never been otherwise, than that the King should give himself all his titles, and the French in their ratifications put in no more than they can well allow him, which is Roy de la Grande Bretagne.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 7th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 4th instant. I am glad my Lord Wharton has been with you. I think there is no doubt to be made, but the party will press upon him the putting in for the Secretary's place, if it must be vacant. I don't see where they can pitch upon another, and they might apprehend he would take it amiss if they did not offer it to him, since he has been so much talked of for it formerly. I am likewise pretty fully persuaded it will embarrass the King and my Lord Chamberlain if he appear in it, and his friends support his pretensions. The natural consequence whereof must be, that your Grace shall be desired to let the seals rest in your hands without any obligation of attendance, but that you may return again

into the country this winter, and have no care upon you, but that of your health. If this should be the case, I don't see that your Grace's compliance can any way lessen your character: on the contrary, your Grace's good nature will have a reluctancy to leave the King under any great difficulty. Perhaps it may be thought hard not to gratify him, when it does not *neither** directly thwart your own resolutions, but only defers putting them in execution, till it can be allowed to be done with decency. The world will know that it does not stick with your Grace, that you have not resigned; but if the King thinks it convenient to let the seals lie for some time where they are at present, I don't know any body expects that you should violently oppose it. I am confident your friends will admire your being passive in it, and if I understood my Lord Chamberlain aright, he said the King would be very inclinable to take that way, if there were not a stiffness in your Grace against it. If you would be contented to be President, there would be less struggle about the other; but I don't see that the attendance in that post will be much less than in the other, in time of peace; but one shall serve less agreeably in it, and less usefully; for that and other reasons, I can't but wish that that employment too may be undisposed till the winter is over.

I have no way left of knowing anything of Brown; if one does not hear of him in a short time, one

* So in MS

may conclude he has found out another way to get supplies.

As for Chaloner, there will be no want of putting him into a sound fright, and that very soon, for the sessions begin next week, and I believe his prosecution will then go on. Price, I suppose, is bailed by this time; the writs of Habeas Corpus being taken out yesterday for carrying him before a Judge, as Mr. Attorney directed.

My Lord Montague has your Grace's letter. My Lords Justices have met this day, and have ordered that Nicholas Baker give an account, whether there are any informations against Thomas Evans, mentioned in my Lord Paget's letter, and then they will consider whether such a price should be paid for bringing him home, when in probability he must be released as soon as he arrives. The Archbishop thinks it the Evans that lived by Greenwich Park wall, and was brought to the office, having been found on the staircase in the Temple when Sir William Perkins was seized. This man was then dismissed, his character not being known, till Hunt gave it after he was taken. When Mr. Baker's answer comes, my Lord Paget will be writ to about this man, and to oppose the partiality of the Porte towards the French, in settling unheard of limits for their advantage only, though their Excellencies think that matter now at an end.

The Attorney and Solicitor attended to give the Lords an account of the Irish Bills. It was ob-

served in a bill about the measure of butter casks, they had added a clause very foreign to it, which was for preserving the interests of such Protestants as were either creditors to, or had purchased from those who were adjudged to be within the articles of Limerick, notwithstanding any thing contained in the bill lately passed for confirming the said articles. But the Lords don't intend to allow of such tacking.*

Last Council, my Lord Chief Justice made his report concerning the bailiff that had insulted the Dutch Ambassador's house; that the man was ready to make all submissions, but that not being accepted of, he had taken out his habeas corpus, and it could not be refused to take bail in this case. It was with some difficulty that my Lord Chief Justice could be prevailed with to defer it till after this day, when the council was to meet again; and in the meantime it was intended that Mr. Secretary should dispose the Ambassador to accept of this submission, rather than to let the man be released by habeas corpus, and to let the matter run on to a prosecution, where it may be doubtful what a jury will determine.

Mr. Secretary was with their Excellencies this morning, and gave them an account that he had been with the Ambassador, but found him unwilling to accept the submission, unless he knew how he should be secured from the like insults for the

* This is too curious an instance of tacking to be omitted.

future. This their Excellencies thought was putting it hard upon them, and if nothing less would satisfy him, they could only order the prosecution to proceed; however, they would rather he should better consider it, and Mr. Secretary was desired to send Monsieur d'Allonne, since perhaps he was not to be persuaded but by Dutch rhetoric.

By the last Dutch post, Mr. Blathwayte writes that the King intends to make a present of the Royal Transport to the Czar of Muscovy, and she is ordered to be fitted up accordingly.

The Council have met this evening. The Dutch Ambassador has accepted the bailiff's submission, so he was called in, reprimanded and discharged.

It is resolved to go to-morrow to the Common Council and propose the loan. Mr. Montague acquainted the Council, the Treasury would declare that they would receive foreign gold and Louis d'ors upon the loan, at the intrinsic value only, viz.:— 17*s.* 4½*d.*

I send your Grace a list of the Bills now approved. You will see one that has lain by for some time, for confirming the Earl of Romney's grant. I suppose he has some assurances from Ireland, that if it comes alone it will pass, or this is to be a leading card for others to follow. I have heard it was put to the Earl of Albermarle to begin it, but he declined it.*

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* A part omitted referring to butter casks, and arrears of quit-rents, &c.

I send your Grace five or six letters more for the West India Governors, as my Lord Bellamont desires them. A clause is added, that they should restrain pirates from going out, and enquire who is assistant in equipping. This is done at the desire of the East India Company, who have had fresh advices from India, of piracies committed in those seas; but I don't hear of Kidd being yet named among them. They hear that the Governor of New York is one that has given the most encouragement to these robbers. That he connives at their going out, and receives presents from them at their return. One company of them who divided share 700*l.* a man, besides other presents, gave Fletcher their ship, which he sold for 1,000*l.*, and it was afterwards fitted out again on the same design. This my Lord Bellamont is directed to enquire into at his arrival at New York. If my Lord Bellamont should be sailed before these letters can reach him, they may go by his Secretary, who will stay here this month, and make use of the Virginia convoy.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

October 9th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 6th, and have sent away the enclosed to the King. I should seem more impertinent than grateful if I troubled your Grace with a repetition of thanks as

often as you are pleased to give new occasions for it. I hope what is done, is as it should be. If this be not too much to ask, it ought to be easier to be obtained, since such an addition would make my circumstances easy, and keep me from a forced dependance. I can be very well contented with it, but the grasping at more would be a real inconvenience. What your Grace would have said to my Lord Chamberlain was done before, the same day I spoke to my Lord Chancellor. My Lord Chamberlain has been out of order these three or four days with a cholick and looseness, but it did not prevent him from coming to the meeting of the Lords Justices and to the Council. He is something better since he took the waters.

I received your Grace's letter yesterday after the Lords were rose, so I cannot mention Sir James Rushout's business to them till Tuesday. I believe a frigate has been long designed for him, and my Lord Orford has given him notice of it. If he will go himself by sea, the way will be open for it, and the six weeks expired, within which hostilities are to cease as far as the southern Cape, before he can be ready to embark. If he will only send his family that way, and go himself by land part of the way, I suppose he will choose rather to go through France into Italy, as Sir Lambert Blackwell does, who has the King's leave for it, and the French King's pass. There is no doubt but the treaty will be reprinted with the preamble, when we know the ratifications

are exchanged in form. In the meantime it is but an interim provision, and we know not whether there may be any cavils at last, though we hope not. But we think there has been some mistake somewhere on that side to keep the matter thus long in suspence. They at first neglected to engross the ratification there, and send it over with the King's hand to it, which had been the most proper and expeditious way. Our Plenipotentiaries were under a prepossession, that the ratification of the separate article was not necessary till the French had sent theirs and were ready to exchange it. The ministers at Ryswick agree upon the times which the peace is to commence, and refer us to the directions we shall receive from Loo, and no such are sent, though there were time enough for it, so that no orders can be given here to the Admiralty, nor no proclamation be published, and we look like people that were neither in peace nor war.

The Lords Justices do not much admire this conduct; this is not like to recommend Mr. Blathwayte to be Secretary of State. He writes to Prior to procure certificates of the peace, and papers to be sent to Newfoundland and other parts of America. Prior writes hither five days after, and is so far from giving an account what they have done in it, that he does not so much as mention that they have received such orders. And thus our negotiations are managed. We have put them in mind of these

omissions, and perhaps may be chid for not knowing what to do without particular orders.

The wind has been so high and contrary, that we can never expect a mail or my Lord Portland, and must have patience a little longer.

I send your Grace a journal of the German prize, which shews our officers have still mischief in their hearts; perhaps the French may have more of it, and would give us a very sensible blow, if they should design any thing upon the Cadiz fleet and succeed in it. The Admiralty think that these great ships that have been seen turning into Brest, are Nesmond's squadron.

I enclose the copy of a letter I received yesterday from the Chancellor of Ireland,* who thinks he has reasons to offer that may solve the difficulties about their bill of out-lawries. I hope his meaning is not that he will shew this precedent has no more inconvenience in it than the former about banishing the regular clergy, for these will be but comparative arguments, and only prove that both were wrong, and then the being so to a lesser degree will hardly justify the persevering in an error, when the nature of it has been since more fully explained. I think the Council of late grows more jealous of the parliamentary proceedings in Ireland, and are upon their guard against them not to be imposed upon.

* Who had a difficult task which he did not execute altogether wisely.

The Lords of the Council went into the city yesterday, and had the answer they could expect, that they would do the utmost to comply with what was proposed. The demand was limited to no sum, but the use was expressed for the paying off the seamen, that the nation might be eased of the charge, and the men to be at liberty to be employed in merchant's service.

A General Court of the Bank was held this day, and a letter read to them from the Lords of the Treasury, desiring a loan of 100,000*l.* or more, for the above-mentioned uses, upon the tallies proposed.

In their debates, they expressed a willingness to assist the public on so necessary an occasion, but none of them thought it convenient they should do it as a Bank. They made an allusion of their case to one that was brought very low by frequent bleeding, and by leaving it off began to recover strength and was almost recovered; whether such an one should hearken to a physician who would advise him to draw thirty or forty ounces more: that their credit revived by a favourable disposition in people to trust them once more, and to lodge their cash in their hands. But if they should so soon perceive they were disposing of it in loans, they might expect the payment of their specie notes would immediately be called for, and every one would run to be the first served, and then they must be irrecoverably lost; but they offered to do all they could in their private

capacities towards raising the sum desired, and it was agreed by a question that they would do it upon the terms proposed to the city; and on Wednesday next they are to meet again to take the subscriptions. Mr. Montague is not pleased with what they have done. He had rather they had taken old remote tallies for their funds, since both loans are going upon the credit of the Exchequer. The higher it shall rise in one place, the more it will fall in another; but if the members of the Bank do strain to raise near the sum, it ought to be as well accepted, as they will act more like wise and honest men in lending their own money rather than other people's.

Sir Theodore Jansein broached his notion to the Bank, how the loan might be made by the particular members, and the Bank enable them to do it, by binding each man ten per cent. upon his stock for six months, after which he was to pay back his proportion upon demand; and this, he said, they might as easily do as discount bills of exchange and buy in near tallies, which, he says, rather increased their cash than lessened it. But others thought it liable to the same objections of impairing their credit, and in one respect was worse, since it might be thought a fictitious loan, contrived to elude the act of parliament, which ties them up from lending to the King, but upon parliamentary funds.

Mr. Harrison has sent hither a letter of attorney for appointing the Earl of Bellamont to act for the patentees. I see they all have signed it, and

Mr. Newton among the rest for my Lord Chancellor; I have desired Mr. Rowley therefore to speak to his father that he would do the like.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Oct. 12th, 1697.

I send your Grace a little Treatise of Mr. Burridge's, who writ the history of the Revolution in Latin. He has made his court to my Lord Galway by disposing his countrymen to entertain the French. He has collected some good remarks, and lets your Grace know how your ancestors lost a great estate in Ireland by non-residence. Upon reading this tract, I am puzzled to think what they will do with Ireland, if they be not encouraged in industry; let who will go thither, they will all turn Irish and barbarous; and many think that the great improvements they are making in trade and manufactures will be highly prejudicial to England. If the protestants in Ireland were not under some apprehension from the papists there, their thoughts would be then employed how they might get rid of their dependance on England, as being that which stunts their growth; and, on the other side, the insurrection of the papists have been in themselves formidable and expensive, and if they were backed by the French it would be fatal.

I send your Grace a bill of Monsieur d'Hervart's,

if you please to allow it; it exceeds 94*l.* what the yearly allowance is established at, but there are some extraordinary articles that do not come within the common computation. Mr. Bowyer, his agent, at first brought a bill of 100*l.* more. I told him that was so far beyond measure he could never think to get it passed.

The post is now arrived, but has brought only the letters of Tuesday last; there is another mail still behind. My Lord Portland was come to the Hague the Sunday before, and would come over with the first fair wind. He is to bring over the King's instructions at what time the parliament shall meet. In the meantime there is nothing said when the King intends to be here. We don't hear that the Germans are ready for signing, but they employ time enough in conferences. My correspondents are not much at leisure to give an account of other people, they are taken up with their own business.

The French have started the chicane again about the King's letter, which is like to continue till the last ratification arrives. I send your Grace what Mr. Prior says of it. Sir Joseph Williamson has let Mr. Secretary know where the instruments may be found, that will clear this difficulty; they are lodged with the protho-notary of chancery, where my Lord Chancellor will send for them; but either it will be accommodated before those can be sent over, or the French are determined to stand it out against any satisfaction. The Lords do not care to have this

matter spoken of, because they think it would occasion an unnecessary disturbance, which they hope the next post will remove.*

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Oct. 23rd, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 20th. I suppose you will now be thinking of drawing towards the town. You are coming into a strange intricacy. My Lord Chamberlain in some companies declares for my Lord Wharton, and knows there is no such thing intended. My Lord Wharton shews a willingness to accept of it, and at the bottom has no mind to it; or, as your Grace foresees, will soon be weary of it. Your Grace will be vehemently pressed to stay in, and you resolve against it. One you know is secretly designed for secretary, and he is utterly incapable of it. What will all this end in at last? †

* I have omitted the letter which follows this, dated 14th October, 1797, as it refers to nothing but the death of Captain Roberts in prison.

† After this letter there appears a complete vacancy till the beginning of December, and Coxe in one place mistakenly asserts that Shrewsbury "was prevented from repairing to town to deliver up the seals to the King, either from a relapse of his complaint, or from a desire to avoid the importunities of all parties.' This was not the case however, Shrewsbury came to Kensington in November for a few days, and a letter from him to the King, dated Kensington, November 18, 1697, is published by Coxe himself in another place. We find from the correspondence of Vernon, also, that even the few days which the Duke staid in town brought on a return of his complaint.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.*

December 2nd, 1697.

The thing I have so long dreaded is fallen upon me, and so suddenly that it hath been impossible for me to make any applications or use any means to ward it off. Mr. Secretary Trumbull resigned the seals yesterday, upon what motives I know not; only in general I hear he hath been troublesomely uneasy of late, and the matters he complained of, I hear were levelled at the Lords Justices; that he had been treated more like a footman than a secretary, and had been sent to for blank warrants, which was about the men Price accused, and that I had countersigned something belonging to him, relating to the separate article of the treaty. I know not what that should be, unless it were the warrant for affixing the seals which my Lord Chancellor expected for his justification, and he was out of town when it was despatched. This is told me by Monsieur Van Huls, Sir William laid open his grievances to my Lord Albemarle, that he might make them known to the King.

I heard not a word of his being removed, till this morning that my Lord Chamberlain told me of it at the office, adding, that the King would acquaint the Cabinet Council, which was to meet after sermon,

* This letter, which precedes and explains the one that follows, has been omitted, I suppose accidentally, in the correspondence before me, and I therefore copy it from Coxe's Shrewsbury Papers.

that he intended I should succeed. He took as much notice of what I could say to the contrary as he used to do formerly.

When the Cabinet was up, my Lord Portland told me the King had declared his intentions, and directed I should attend him at Kensington, at eight this evening. I come now from thence, and am unhappily loaded with the seals. I said all I could to excuse it, that his Majesty might understand my weakness and unfitness, in a truer character than I am afraid hath been given of me, and when that could not be admitted, such as I must submit. I could not meet with my Lord Chancellor or Lord Orford before I went (they being at Lord Romney's) to have desired their interposition. I saw them only just as the Council rose; and they gave me joy with such pleasant countenances, that I believe the matter was very new to them. I cannot help thinking the manner of coming in is as unaccountable as the rest. God knows, I have little joy in it, and would infinitely rather have preferred your Grace's service, which, by your goodness, I could sooner hope to give satisfaction in, and have more reason than ever to beg you will not withdraw from me your patronage and protection; and be pleased to think, when the time comes, how to make my fall easy, for meteors raised on a sudden were never designed to last long.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 2, 1697.

To-morrow I shall be sworn a clerk of the cabinet council. The more I see into this business, the more I find myself unhappily involved. It is a miserable thing to be destitute of advice, friends, and resolution. My Lord Chancellor and Lord Orford knew nothing of this throwing honour upon me till chapel-time. I must have been otherwise a little astonished that they would not have honoured me with one word of advice.

This unaccountable method of preferring people above all things puzzles and confounds me. I have scarce eat or slept since, and know not how to go either backward or forward.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 4, 1697.

I have received the honour of your Grace's letter by Mr. Chancey, and have sent the inclosed to my Lord Chancellor; that which I mentioned to have left at his house for your Grace was only the speech under a cover.

Whether Fisher has any money ordered him or not I can't tell. I acquainted your Grace by the last post with what my Lord Portland had told me about Colt and Fisher.

Yesterday my Lord Chamberlain told me he would come to me to the office at seven. I did not know what the business was, but I found Colt came about that time by his appointment. Then it appeared that Colt was to disown before my Lord Chancellor and myself that he ever said to Fisher that Sir William Trumbull dissuaded him from making any application to your Grace, for then my Lord Chancellor would do nothing for him, he hating the Duke of Shrewsbury more than any man living, and was resolved to ruin him. This Colt positively denied ever to have said, and that he had taxed Fisher with it, who at first justified he did tell him so, and at last said, he told him something like it, whereupon Colt told him he would have nothing more to do with a man who would put such false things upon him, and that he had taken his leave of him.

When he had concluded his protestations, my Lord said nobody doubted but Colt was abused, and Fisher was a lying fellow, but he gave him this occasion to clear himself, and that I might write to your Grace, which he enjoined me to, and gave Mr. Colt good advice, not only to renounce Fisher, but any other of the make *bates*.*

Colt stayed with me after my Lord was gone, and gave me a little more light into Fisher's dark ways, which he said, were always mysterious to him. He spoke of three letters that Fisher had in his pocket, which he pretended came from France. But Colt

† So written.

believes they were made here; he had never seen them, but heard something repeated out of them, which were the same Fisher had told your Grace.

It is, I perceive at present, a general reflection upon nobody knows what, and perhaps the names may be in blank, to be filled up as they should close with one or other party, that now Fisher says he will not shew the letters to any person whatsoever but to the King only, these being such secrets that nobody else was fit to be entrusted with.

He told me at last that I was one of those Mr. Fisher had no good opinion of, and he had often heard him say there was something amiss that I should be employed. I don't doubt but he could have told me much more if he would, but I thank him for this information. I never expect or desire to be well with any who are capable of these practices. I would willingly have forgiven their malice if it had prevented my coming into an employment which I know not what to do with, and they will not displease me if they turn me out again, provided they do it very soon.

I shall put my Lord Chamberlain in mind of the President de la Tour's present, but his letters are already gone. I shall lay before his Majesty the letter from the Lords Justices, and receive his directions upon it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 6th, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 4th, and am sorry your Grace should give into the mistake of other people, to think me capable of being Secretary of State. I am so thoroughly convinced of the contrary, that I can't look upon myself to be in any such post, and therefore you will please to allow me not to alter any thing in my manner of writing to you, for I only value myself upon being your Grace's servant; the little reputation I had in that is all I was capable to support, and I must now lose it again by being removed out of my proper station. But I shall not be so ill a prophet as I am a secretary, for your Grace will please to remember that I foretold this advancement, if it ever befell me, would be my ruin. I have done what I could to keep it off, and have persevered in it to the last. I desired my Lord Albemarle yesterday to lay it before the King how unqualified I was, and that it might yet be considered before I was sworn. I believe he did it fairly, but no excuses would be admitted; so I am carried up with a whirlwind, and I must get down as I can, which I imagine will not be long; and therefore I could not find in my heart to do Mr. Rowley that prejudice to make him a follower of my miserable fortune; but if I continue to the period of your Grace's office, which I am con-

fident I shall not, I will take care of Mr. Rowley as I would of my son. Perhaps I may have half done my business already by my last attempt. I suppose it was immediately told to my Lord Chamberlain, and I have not seen him since.

I saw my Lord Portland yesterday, who inclines me to believe Fisher in his positive assertions, that he told your Grace nothing but what he heard from Colt, and I am inclined to think there is much of truth on this side, and this solves to me the haste Sir William Trumbull went off with.

The King has Mr. Frampton's letter, and I'll speak to my Lord Orford about sending a ship to the Bay.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 14th, 1697.

My Lord Chamberlain called here last night, and shewed me your Grace's letter; he was uncertain whether he should write to you this post or not, and therefore directed me to acquaint you, that he understands by your letter, you would not be uneasy to hold the seals, if the King desired it, till he saw you again, sometime hence towards the spring. I would have put him upon saying something of your successor; but he waived it, and turned it off, saying, that he must think of one to supply his place.

I found it has made some impression upon my Lord Sunderland, that notice was taken by one or two in the House of Commons of an old minister that should advise the King to give the House his opinion in a speech that a standing army was necessary, and that it must come from one who had given no better advice in former reigns. I told him the King would never be long served by any one, if people were to run away at the first noise of thunder. That I thought it was only bidding for him, as my Lord Shaftesbury was gained by the shew of an impeachment! there are gentlemen already complain in the House that the King cannot be served by half the people, by reason of means used to exclude the rest from his favour.

I believe his lordship, by the message he gives me to your Grace, neither intends to part with his own place, or fill yours on a sudden; but yet I believe my Lord Wharton is in some expectation of coming in pretty soon. He lately asked Mr. Hopkins whether he did not think it might be more advantageous to him if he should remove to the other office, not telling him for what reasons he asked him it. Mr. Hopkins made the compliment as if he were unwilling; but I advised him for his own sake and mine not to refuse it, when it shall be offered more explicitly. If he removes I can better provide for Mr. Rowley, if he chooses to come hither; but at all adventures he shall not be left destitute, when he is not retained in your Grace's service.

I have not yet seen the Bishop* of Salisbury in relation to Mr. Cresset, whom I will serve the best I can. I believe he would extend his character either to Saxony or Hamburgh.

As to Mr. Vernon's offer to be my chaplain, it will be some time yet before I can persuade myself I am secretary, and I question whether I shall ever recover from so great a surprise. But I shall forbear troubling your Grace with it any more, though nobody has applied such solid comforts.

I have seen my Lord Portland and Mr. Montagu since I began this letter, and I find something is ordered for Fisher.

This morning I was haunted again by Arnold, who would needs shew me a petition of Smith's, that was put into his hands to be presented to the House; but I refused to read it. And I should think he don't intend to present it, by giving me notice. But he designs one should silence him by the promise of a place, which is more than I can undertake for, or think he deserves; and when he saw my indifference as to the stopping, he asked me to acquaint the Lord Chancellor with it, whom he could satisfy that some in both Houses were concerned in this matter.

That I think of doing, though I did not say I would. For my own particular sense one sees no end of this knavery. I had rather he should present his petition now than at another time. I don't

* Bishop Burnet.

think there is any disposition in the House to meddle with it, and I shall not spare letting them know what it was would have quieted them.

The enclosed will inform your Grace that the Parliament is up in Ireland. I believe the Lord Chancellor Melburn is on his way hither, I send him this night the King's letter of leave, though he does not intend to stay for it. He desires the seals may be given in commission to the Earls of Meath, Longford, and Blessington.

These two days the House has spent on the estimates of the debt and deficiencies, which at last are referred to a private committee to examine; and the managers for the King like it best so, since this matter will now lie, till they see what provision is intended for the Civil List. And to bring that on they have got it ordered that an account be brought how the revenues of the Crown stand charged, which they hope to get considered in the Committee of Supply on Thursday.

The House have made one step more to-day towards disbanding, by their order, that it be an instruction to the Committee to consider of a gratuity to be given to such officers and soldiers of the English army who shall be disbanded.

Mr. Harley tells me their intention was to allow them half-pay for three years. By the word English, it looks as if they intended to exclude Scotch and Dutch officers, though he says not, if they were upon English pay.

I find they would willingly begin with disbanding the common soldiers, as having little due to them, but that is a hazardous point. Some think they will relent of their Saturday's vote, and consent to the leaving 14 or 15,000 men; but I see no great appearance of it as yet; I believe they may be brought to 10,000.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 16th, 1697.

I have told my Lord Chancellor the discourse I had with that hot-headed Arnold, he did not disapprove of my indifference as to the use he should make of his paper, when he talks with him himself, perhaps he will enter more into the particulars with him. He added he would now take his opportunity of speaking to the King about Brown. His house has been haunted by him of late, and he threatens what he will do if he be longer neglected. I told his Lordship how he had been supplied, and that 5*l.* more should be given him, if there were occasion, which he was satisfied with, and therefore I will speak to Mr. Arden about it. He took notice of what I had heard from others of the Earl of Peterborough* seeming to be outrageously malicious. It is apprehended that a seeming phrensy in Mr. Waller, has arisen from some such conversation.

* Previously called Lord Monmouth.

He came about seven in the evening on Tuesday last to Kensington, and went first to Brown, and threatened mischief, if he were not immediately brought to the King, (both he and his men whom he left in the coach having a pistol;) he said he had something to discover to the King that concerned his safety. Whether he saw the King or not I know not, but being carried to my Lord Portland he talked with him, as one that was well in his senses, and owned he was under a mistake in opposing the keeping up any force. I suppose a great deal more was said by him than will be repeated, and I heard the Earl of Peterborough was with the King yesterday.

There has been little done these two days in the House of Commons. I thought they might this day have entered into the consideration of the supply for the Civil List, but the call of the House put it off, and it will not come on till Monday.

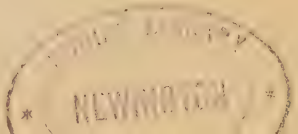
Aylmer is chosen Parliament man for Dover, he had 111 votes, and Papellon but 90.

The Sheriffs were pricked this evening. I send your Grace a copy of their names as far as I took it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 21st, 1697.

I have the honour of your Grace's letters of the 18th and 19th to acknowledge. The messenger did not arrive last night till I was come back from Ken-



sington; it was this morning, therefore, that I carried your letter to the King, who heard it read, and then took it and kept it. He only said he finds you excuse yourself on account of your want of health, he was sorry you should have that reason. But he was sure the others could not be satisfactory, and nobody would think you had not all the other qualifications that could be wished for. He wondered a little to hear you thought of changing the climate, and questioned whether that were necessary in your case.

I believe they will now proceed to confer this employment* on my Lord Marlborough. I can't but think some besides the Princess originally intended it him, and now it will be more easily effected upon your Grace's declining it.

I will shew Brown's letter to my Lord Chancellor, and I have another from Mr. Arden of the same strain. I hope they will put such a mad fellow off their hands, who is got into a way of plaguing all mankind with his letters.

I don't know what my Lord Portland means by the designs of your enemies being discovered. If it be spoken in reference to Mr. Waller, I know no more of him than what he told me, that he had changed his opinion as to an entire disbanding of the forces, and thought it might be of dangerous consequence. I suspected Waller's apprehensions arose from what he heard the Earl of Peterborough

* Governor of the Duke of Gloucester.

and other his associates discourses, but of this my Lord Portland said nothing to me. But I hear the Earl of Peterborough was next day with the King, perhaps on this occasion.

On Sunday last my Lord Chancellor gave me Smith's vindication and his petition to read, which he had from Arnold. I returned them to him yesterday, and find they are the same that were shewn to Mr. Hammond. The petition begins with your Grace's employing him, and the services he had done, every thing being drawn in that might give a colour to them. His prayer is, that if any thing be laid to his charge, he may be admitted to clear it, or otherwise that they would address to his Majesty he might be received into his protection and his services considered.

To-day in the House of Commons, (and my Lord Chamberlain hardly escapes any day), Mr. Grenville and Sir Thomas Dyke, were blunter upon him than any body had yet been. The latter said:—If it were not time now to talk of ill ministers, and if any were about the King who misled the two last, and that either gave up the rights of the people, or the Protestant religion, he would move for addressing the King, that he might be removed from his Councils and his presence for ever. I hear my Lord was before sensible of a cloud gathering, and inclines to retire before it grows to a storm; and that my Lady persuades him to it, as thinking they should not otherwise be let alone.*

* He resigned almost immediately.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

December 23d, 1697.

It was expected this day that my Lord Norris would have begun a debate against my Lord Chamberlain, and that several others were prepared to carry it on. I know not who gave him the alarm, but the King was acquainted with it, and spoke to my Lord Wharton to engage his friends to stand by my Lord Chamberlain.

His Lordship gave the King such an answer as he thinks shews great coldness between them. The King would not make it greater by letting my Lord Chamberlain know with what indifference my Lord Wharton received the account of his danger. But since he understood my Lord Wharton intended to make your Grace a visit in this interval, I am commanded to acquaint you that his Majesty would be glad you would use your endeavours to dispose my Lord Wharton to entertain kinder thoughts of my Lord Chamberlain, and remove any misunderstanding that may be between them.

I know not what may be intended hereafter. But nothing has happened to-day that looked in the least angrily, though my Lord Norris was in the house.

I think one may say a cloud is gathering, but upon whom it will fall I don't know. One finds himself threatened by some of both sides, and therefore endeavours to engage as many of each party as he can, and your Grace knows his activity. Others won't own they have given occasion to be suspected,

but think it most prudent to secure themselves against those who raised the first jealousies, so that I am afraid it is hard to find a medium of accommodation. If it be brought to a decision, one or other must give way, as that shall be determined, and those who cannot trust to reconciliations are unwilling to protract and lose the present opportunity, in which they may do as much hurt as they can receive, and hereafter the case may alter.

These are fit waters for one of the Earl of Peterborough's humour to fish in. He declares himself a champion of my Lord Chamberlain, and if he be attacked he will break his truce, which, he says, he only entered into at his solicitation. I think if my Lord Chamberlain makes that his support he chooses a weak one, and what will fail him.

I spoke with my Lord Chancellor yesterday about Brown, who promised to mention it to the King to-night, together with Lord Chamberlain.

Perhaps he might have had an opportunity when he went in with the King from council.

Whether my Lord Chamberlain will be there or not I can't tell, but he went away sometime before.*

* I have omitted a letter which follows this, respecting Brown the informer, and substituted a letter from Vernon to the Duke of Shrewsbury, concerning the resignation of Lord Sunderland, which was wanting in the MS. submitted to me, but was luckily published by Mr. Coxe.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Dec. 27th, Jan. 6th, 1697-8.

I make the more haste to acknowledge the honour of your Grace's letter of the 25th, because I would not delay acquainting you that my Lord Sunderland would not stay to be addressed from court, and, therefore, last night, he delivered up his key and staff. He was with the King about a quarter of an hour, before the cabinet sat, and when he came out of the closet he took me over to his lodgings, and said he had pressed the King he might resign, not being able to lead any longer the life he had led; that the King did not think fit he should leave his key there, but gave him leave to put it into my hands, which he accordingly did, cutting it off from his side.

When I came up stairs again, I found those were not the directions, but what he would absolutely do; for the king would not have the key thus delivered, much less through my hands; and when the cabinet was up, I was sent to him to Erle's-court,* to desire he would take his key again, but he could not endure to hear of it. I begged only he would suspend his resolution till next day that he had spoke to my Lord Chancellor, who had not then been at council, acquainting him that the King had told it to my Lord Orford, who very much disapproved of what he had done. He was unalterably fixed to hear no more of

* The seat of his friend Mr. Gray.

it, and never to meddle with that or any other public employment. I put him in mind that he would give contrary advices to those who were as uneasy in their employments as he might be; and since he did it in consideration of the King's service, whether the same considerations ought not to prevail on him when the King found himself in such distress, by being forsaken of those whom he placed the greatest confidence in, and I hope whatsoever disgusted him might be made easier. He said it was not on account of the parliament only that he came to this resolution, for he had otherwise led the life of a dog, having done all that was in his power for the service of a party whom he could never oblige to live easily with him, or to treat him with common civility. He came out with one expression, which I shall never mention but to your Grace, that there was no rack like to what he suffered, by being ground as he had been between Lord Monmouth and Lord Wharton. As soon as it was out, he recollected himself again, and said he would not have opened himself so far to any body but me; your Grace therefore will please to keep his secret if it be one. He added the troubles he had undergone with the E—— of P——,* only for the service of your Grace and my Lord Orford. I put in a word then, and said the E—— of P—— would now let himself loose again, remembering what

* Earl of Peterborough.

he had told to my Lord Portland; but he slighted, saying, what can he do or signify?

The King is very much concerned at his going off: he hath been pressing for it these three Sundays, successively, and all endeavours used to turn him from it. The King finds himself in great want of some he may be free with. He doth not see he hath any but my Lord Chancellor, and he hath business that keeps him from attending as often as it would be necessary.

I cannot but be concerned at these changes, and do not see what good consequences they can have. This was certainly an able and an active man, and I believe it was not impossible to remove the jealousies that were taken upon both sides. How far he will act hereafter, behind the curtain, I know not; but his inclinations, I fear, are wholly turned from any thing that may be called a Whig.

I must tell your Grace, in confidence, that I believe my Lord Wharton wishes to see that staff in your Grace's hands, and I am sure it cannot be in better, and what all people ought to be satisfied with, if any thing can content them. But I do not like the manner it comes to be made void, and I should be glad first to see, what is to ensue upon it, and how this news will be received by so many divided interests. We are coming upon a ticklish point, which is the keeping up a greater number of forces than the Parliament seems yet to intend. I am afraid our safety

requires it, and if it cannot be complied with, we shall find ourselves in a very ill condition, more ways than one. If we are possessed only with the imagination of future danger to our liberty, we shall fall into some fatal crisis.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

29th of Dec. 1697.

I despatch this messenger to your Grace for conveying the enclosed from my Lord Chancellor, who, I think, would not have failed writing last night, if my Lord Sunderland had met with him as he endeavoured, for I know nobody more concerned than his Lordship that your Grace should comply with what is desired of you. I much doubt how long he would bear standing almost alone in such a post as he must now enter upon.

I don't know but his resolutions must depend upon those your Grace shall take; the supplying my Lord Sunderland's place will be agreeable to neither of you, and nothing but preferring the public to all other considerations can make it go down. It is not to be doubted but people will find a greater miss of my Lord Sunderland than they imagined. It would have been much easier accommodating with him than to want him. Perhaps he has not judged rightly that they should have been defending him in the House as soon and as often as he was ever

glanced at, since that might have exposed him unnecessarily, and brought it to a chance whether he could have been supported or not; but, on the other side, if they had considered all the consequences of it, I think they should not have been wanting in giving him all assurances of their standing firm by him, which would have encouraged him to have borne the shock. But now he goes away with an opinion, whether well or ill grounded, that they would have given him up, and perhaps have left impressions on the King that they have neither gratitude, constancy, or goodnature. I believe my Lord Chancellor and Lord Orford have satisfied him as to their part; whether my Lord Wharton will think it worth his pains to do it, I know not. I saw him this morning, and let him know your Grace's care and concern to have prevented this resolution, and I was sure your next would shew the trouble you were in that it had happened. He never mentions your Grace but as one whose friendship he entirely relied on, and all conclude it was a misfortune you were not here the last week.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 27th. Mr. Brydges told me some mention had been made to him of a design to attack my Lord Sunderland. He would not tell me from whom he had it, if he had named Moyle, I could not have failed suspecting, as your Grace does, that it was put to him by way of trial, and most likely in order to the carrying the whisper round.

I think Mr. Brydges gave them no reason to believe he approved of it; he told me his answer was, he had seen so many of these attempts come to nothing, that he would no more be concerned in them. I perceive he intended to be absent whenever that came on, because he would not appear against my Lord Sunderland, and he knew not how to be for him, under the uncertainty he was what managements there had been between him and Lord Peterborough, in relation to your Grace, or otherwise I am confident he might have depended on his assistance.

Mr. Brydges is now out of town, and the case is over. I know not whom Sir Rowland Gwynn's clause is aimed at, but the proofs and trial must be as in other cases of treason, according to the late act. I know not whether this will confirm your suspicion of some trick intended, that my Lord Coningsby tells me the Duke of Bolton has some clauses to add to this bill, and one is, to lay a penalty upon the secretary, if he don't discover who they are, that bring their pardons to him, or something of that nature. At first it was intended to be a pecuniary penalty, but that was altered, since it would not be allowed to the House of Lords to lay it; and it is changed into forfeiture of office, which is no very terrible thing even to me. If the Earl of Peterborough intends to be troublesome, either on this account or any other, I really think he will only expose himself; he is too well known to be much

feared. I rather imagine the designs now will be laid to mortify the Treasury or Admiralty, or both; and this will be thought the way to avenge my Lord Sunderland.

I'll speak to my Lord Portland, that Fisher may name his French intelligencer.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 1st, 1697-8.

The King came so late to Kensington on Thursday night, that I was prevented from writing to your Grace by that post. I should otherwise then have acquainted you that I had spoke to the Archbishop of Canterbury about the Earl of Castlehaven. He very well remembered what he had promised your Grace, and will not fail to move the King in it at the first opportunity; he does not doubt but the King will take upon him the education of the Earl's son, and he thinks of having him sent at first to one of the universities, which will not cost above 120*l.* or 140*l.* per annum. I proposed likewise that some consideration should be had for the Father, to enable him to stay in town. His Grace don't think it fit for him to go away this winter. I suppose he will get him a present made now, and some moderate yearly pension settled upon him.

I received yesterday the honour of two of your Grace's letters, one by the post, the other by Collins

the messenger; and this day, Legate brought me yours of the 31st, with a letter enclosed for my Lord Chancellor, which is sent to him, and those for my Lord Sunderland and Lord Portland, they had them yesterday. I gave the King the first account of what your Grace writ in answer to the invitation sent you, which his Majesty seemed well satisfied with, since it gave him hopes you would accept this employment, when those two difficulties were cleared; and his Majesty does not doubt but your Grace will be every where vindicated from being thought to have had any part, or to have given any handle to my Lord Sunderland's retiring. His Majesty likewise thinks it fit you should be secured from unreasonable molestations, and believes you will be soon satisfied that you have nothing to apprehend on that account. His Majesty is very sensible of what prejudice it is to his service, that the worst of men have it so much in their power to make the best uneasy.

I have seen my Lord Sunderland twice or thrice since he came from Windsor, and methinks his resentment is against the Whigs for having abandoned him, or, at least, not having taken that occasion to give him any assurance they would have stood by him, and he owes it to the Tories that they quashed the design against him. He still excused your Grace and my Lord Chancellor from having no hand in it, and said Mr. Montagu had been with him to make his good intentions known, but I think he takes it yet kindlier of Sir Harry Hobart, who

brought him likewise the compliments of Sir Walter Young and Mr. Clark, that they should not have been backward in their respects to him when it came to the trial; but this is all since his resolution was taken, and is hardly a plaster for the sore.

This morning he sent for me to let me know how much he was surprised and struck with a passage in your Grace's letter to my Lord Portland, that was added to confirm the doubts you had whether some suspicions would not remain that you were pleased at his removal, since my Lord Sunderland's intimacy with Lord Peterborough made some people jealous of the sincerity of his friendship towards you. He laid hold of this as a fit ground that he should resolve upon retiring, when he was so liable to be misrepresented, and his best intentions were misunderstood, and then repeated what he had formerly said, that he continued a correspondence with the Earl of Peterborough on no other account but for the service of your Grace and Lord Orford. What he means by it I can't comprehend, but I said, I thought he would not be surprised at this passage in the manner your Grace makes use of it, since I did not doubt but he had often heard that people were puzzled to think what should occasion so great a familiarity between him and that lord. I found he intended I should take notice of it to your Grace, what an amazement this was to him. He happened to say another thing yesterday, which I was as much

amazed at; he told it as a secret, and therefore I shall only mention it to yourself; he said there was no way of keeping the Earl of Peterborough quiet but by making him easier in his fortune, which was very low, and therefore he was for moving the King to give him a pension of 2,000*l.* per annum, and to restore him to the council. I said I did not know any would grudge it him, if they would make him wiser. That he might be great, and at a distance, but I thought bringing him into the council might be joining men together sooner than they were ripe for it. He answered that he would not be satisfied if he were left under any mark of disgrace. When he mentioned it again to-day, he said it was only a sudden thought that came into his head when he saw what your Grace writ of living undisturbed, but he had never mentioned it to the King, and perhaps should not.

He is gone to Windsor this day to see his lady, and goes to Althorpe on Monday, where I don't hear he will stay above a fortnight. I know not what humour he will come up in, but if he will then act, I don't see how it can be in concert with those with whom he has found so much fault with.

Some are a little inquisitive to know what brings my Lord Lonsdale to town at this time of the year, who, they hear is on the road. My Lord Sunderland says he is not sent for; on the other side, Sir John Lowther did not expect him till he heard he was coming away. Some imagine he is to be made

secretary; if that be so, people will guess from whence it comes.

They talk too as if my Lord President would now come to council, who says he forebore it only while my Lord Sunderland was there.

My Lord Chancellor was with the King this morning; part of the business was the challenge sent to the Chancellor of Ireland. I was called in and directed to commit them both, the Lord and the Brigadier to the Tower, which was done this evening.

My Lord Spencer comes to me very late this evening, and tells me surprising news, that the Earl of Clancarty is come over, and has got to his sister, and has locked himself up with her at my Lord Sunderland's lodgings. I have a warrant for apprehending him, and a guard of soldiers for securing him.

I spoke to my Lord Portland about Fisher's intelligence in France, who tells me he has his name and that Fisher gave it him, when he delivered him two or three of his letters, and has promised he shall come to him at Paris. This is a cheap spy, if he has made his journey and lived there all this time for the sum your Grace gave him. I shall find none at that rate.

I have acquainted the King what I intend to do with B——,* who likes well of it, and he now finds the King will please to employ him, is proud of it,

* Brown.

and swears he will do it faithfully. He is to come to me on Monday, and I have promised him 30*l.* to put him into equipage, he being now out of sorts, and he is to bring me his narrative with his proofs, which he says he had prepared for the press. I'll keep it for an answer to Smith's papers, if occasion serves. I shall consider a little as to the time he should be sent away, for if Lord Peterborough will revive again in the House of Lords the business of Fenwick's papers, as my Lord Spencer tells me he hears he is about it, I don't know but Brown will be most useful here, and I am pretty sure of him now, and the fellow is in very good humour.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 11th, 1697-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 8th, and am very sorry your health depends so much upon the use of exercise, which does not look like any good preparation for your coming to town, where I believe you will be wanted to strengthen your friends. Not that I think it of absolute necessity, or that it is expected you should leave the country yet a while. Perhaps before you can be in a condition to undertake such a journey, one may be better able to judge how affairs are like to turn. I believe it will not be long before my Lord Sunderland returns to London, for I hear nothing of his going to

Althorpe, and it may be worth while to see with what inclination and what credit he returns, and how far he will concern himself in the business. I send your Grace his answer to your explanation of what you writ to my Lord Portland. I don't doubt but you may be upon what terms with him you please. Whether he will shew the same countenance to some of your friends is what I shall be glad to know, those who are their opposites in the House, maintain their ground against them, and let things go no otherwise than they will have it, which appeared by their sticking to their vote on Saturday, as also by the sum they have agreed to this day for maintaining the guards and garrisons.

Mr. Harley began very early with a proposal only of 300,000*l.*, and thought it very fair as exceeding King Charles's establishment in 1680, which was about 250,000*l.*

Mr. Pelham thought that too straight a provision, as the present circumstances stood; but let them know what he meant by the vote was, that 10,000 men might be kept up, and that 4 or 5,000 of them might be horse and dragoons, if the King found it necessary, and therefore he was for 400,000*l.* which Mr. Montague was willing to close with, as seeing no reason to expect more. And in all probability it would have gone that way, but Sir Christopher Musgrave took the medium between the two sums, and preaching up unanimity, and what consequence it was that all should concur in a matter of

that moment. Others acquiesced, being sensible they could do no better, and the resolution of the Committee ended in 350,000*l.*

They have made an order to-day which is I suppose particularly pointed, and that is for Mr. Lowndes to lay before them an account of all grants since the 3rd of December, 1696. I think the grant of the Earl of Clancarty's estate is since that time, and I know not whether Mr. Montague have not a grant of a sum of money upon the cutting down of wood, which they have most a mind to look after. He being the person they have the greatest mind to lower, as one that stands in their way.

If they should fall upon my Lord Portland, it would be a very unlucky time for it, he being just gone for France. He went away yesterday at six in the morning, and will be this nigh at Dover. The teazing him now, or sending a disparaging vote after him, must have an ill look and effect in what he is going about.

Mr. Smith* has been with me, and will come again to-morrow, when I shall let him know what Exchequer Bills I shall have occasion for. Sir Joseph Hern says he can't take them under nine per cent. discount, so that there will be about 280*l.* wanting to make up what the 100 guineas will fall short of 4,000 guilders, which is the sum Monsieur Jurieu writes for.

* Of the Treasury.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 13th, 1697-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 10th, and this morning Mr. Plowden was with me. I have spoke to my Lord Chancellor and to the King about him this evening, and he will have a Privy Seal for his stay here, provided he finds securities for his good behaviour. I prepared him for that part in the morning, for I hoped the King would take that method with all he grants the like leave to. I hope it will be some tie upon those who have the permission more than their usual sense of the favour done them; and it will be the best justification I can think of to the Secretaries, and preserve them from the suspicions of having any bye ends in procuring these warrants. Mr. Plowden submitted willingly to it, only he hoped it would not be required particularly of him and not of others. I think that is not to be apprehended when the circumstances are the same.

Some cases indeed are different, as the Duke of Richmond's and Duke of St. Albans', who were both in France since the war.

The King goes to the House of Lords to-morrow to pass this bill against Correspondences, with another for continuing the assassinats in prison.*

* I find this so written, and can only suppose that it refers to Bernardi Counter, and the rest who were detained in Newgate without trial,

The opposite party could not carry their point to-day in the Committee of Ways and Means. They thought to make all things give way to the raising of money for disbanding the army. But they were seasonably put in mind of the deficiencies that stood first in the King's speech, and the act was read to them which declared, that if the exchequer bills were not paid off with the year's funds, what remained uncancelled should be unsatisfied out of the first aids to be given this year. And they were kept so close to it, that they were fain to give the precedency to this resolution, that a supply be granted to his Majesty; which, together with the funds already settled for that purpose, shall be sufficient to answer and cancel all exchequer bills issued out, not exceeding 2,700,000*l.* And this they were told was the way, not only to maintain their credit, but to do the thing they aimed at, viz., disbanding the forces.

It was pretty visible what some gentlemen aimed at, to engross the best funds, and apply it to the paying of the army, and to leave other matters to shift as they could. When this question was carried it was readily yielded to them that theirs should follow, viz. That a supply be granted to his

after having in all cases but one, been arrested on warrants which did not specify that they were accused on oath. Bernardi was detained more than thirty years a prisoner in Newgate, and his case places on record one of the grossest instances of tyranny and injustice, that was ever practised by the King, or sanctioned by the representatives of a free and civilized people.

Majesty for the speedy paying and disbanding of the army. But it will hardly be now so as they first designed it, especially if they fail of another project they have, which is to begin with paying off and dismissing the common soldiers, who have but little due to them. The officers and quarters they think may forbear longer, especially the former, being kept as they intend for some time upon half-pay.

Now it is resolved that exchequer bills shall be satisfied, a bill will be brought in with remedies for keeping down the discount, which was running to an excessive rate, insomuch that the last subscription was not like to be paid in.

Mr. Smith brought me his Exchequer bills, but he was unwilling to leave them till he hears again from your Grace, because of the high discount. So that the remittance is put off till the next post, but I'll let Mr. Jurieu know it is coming.

I did not intend to lessen Lady West—'s* advice or her kindness in giving it, but I was glad to find myself eased of a greater apprehension I was under. We are still in a calm at present, both as to Lord P——†, and Lord Clancarty.

I have a letter from Lord Portland this evening, which was writ in the morning at Dover, just before his embarking. Mr. Lowndes is to give in his account of grants on Saturday next. Sir John Bolles gave a touch to-day of what they aim at, dropping

* Westmorland. † Portland concerning his grant.

out words in a speech about timber grants, and destroying of forests. Mr. Montague plucks up a spirit, and will not bate them an inch.

I hear Lord Sunderland carries his Lady down to Althorpe on Monday or Tuesday next, and intends to be in town about ten days after.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 15, 1697-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 12th, and have shewn that part of it that concerns the forces to Mr. Montague. I hope to see the lords to-morrow; but what between the House of Commons and Kensington I have now less time than ever. Mr. Montague was very glad to see your Grace's opinion in that matter.

I think by the compromise they made in giving 350,000*l.* for the forces, all share alike; there is nothing done the country will be dissatisfied at. Another attempt is to be made of getting two marine regiments more on the ordinary of the navy. This will be an addition of 6,000 foot, those regiments consisting of 1,500 each.* I wish the grasping at them don't endanger those they have, for

* So I find it written, though the calculation, upon its face, does not appear accurate. Vernon must include the two regiments of marines already existing.

neither side will willingly lose their popularity, especially the jealousy increasing that an undermining game is playing.

My Lord Sunderland endeavours to clear himself of it, and some advances are made by him towards creating a better understanding; but I know not yet what success it will have. I received a letter from him this day, whereof the enclosed is a copy. I suppose it is intended to be shewn to my Lord Chancellor and some others, which will be done to-morrow.

The King would be very glad that way could be made for his coming back again; if it can be by a thorough reconciliation, perhaps it may be of use. If he comes otherwise one may guess to what that will end in.

The opposing party are pushing at every body; the Admiralty had their turn to-day, as the enclosed paper will inform you.

Mr. Lowndes is to make his report on Monday next, and then individuals will be attacked; hitherto it has been whole commissions. It is said Mr. Montague is chiefly aimed at, and perhaps my Lord Chancellor may have a glance. If nothing be made of it I hope their edge will be abated.

This might be no ill time if my Lord Sunderland would make use of it to shew his good-will to the Whigs, and that he has no design against them. If they keep their ground with their own strength, they may less consider his friendship afterwards, and

be so confirmed in their doubts of his sincerity towards them, as never to rely upon it more.

I hear a whisper as if my Lord Jersey were to have the seals; if it be so, I think the reconciliation harder. I wish we be not picking out moderate men so long till the warm sprightly men on both sides grow discontented.

My Lord Portland carried away his instructions with a blank, which is to be supplied according to the state of that matter the Treasury should draw up. I hear it is ready, and will be brought to council to-morrow. I don't yet know the particulars, but Mr. Lowndes tells me 50,000*l.* at least was settled on the late Queen* by grants under the Great Seal, but is not positive whether some part may not be under the Privy Seal, and besides this there are more lands coming to her in reversion.

I have heard lately the Queen does not think of concerning herself in soliciting this payment, but leaves it to the *French* to take their own way.

As to Father Harrison, I never heard precisely where he was; but if he be in France, my Lord Portland thinks himself authorised to endeavour his removal.

The King came yesterday to the House of Lords, and passed the bill against corresponding with King James. People apply now for leave to stay: Lord

* Mary of Modena, wife of James II. I believe it was stipulated at Ryswick that the sum of fifty thousand pounds per annum should be settled on her; but the pension, I fear, was never paid.

Bellew is among them. I shall lay their names before the King to-morrow, and know his pleasure. I suppose it will be referred to Mr. Attorney to give his opinion, what shall be the form of obliging those who have leave to stay to find sureties for their good behaviour.

I have acquainted your Grace that Mr. Plowden will have a leave; he has brought me this day the names of his sureties, viz. Sir Walter Blount, Sir William Brownlow, Sir Cornwall Bradshaw, and Sir John Gage.

Five lords have petitioned the King on behalf of my Lord Clancarty, viz. the Duke of Bedford, Duke of Ormond, Lord Inchiquin, Lord Ranelagh, and Lord Burlington. The last is very ill, and 'tis much doubted whether he can recover. I am apt to think there may be some consideration had of this young man's case.

The King went yesterday to see the Czar.*

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

January 18th, 1697-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 15th, and have let Mr. Montague know your concern for him, which he understood likewise from some other your Grace writ to.

* Peter the Great, who about this time lodged at the house of Mr. Evelyn, Says Court, at Deptford.

He is very sensible of your kindness, and not apprehensive what will be the issue of this business.

The enclosed will inform your Grace what passed yesterday in the House of Commons. This day was spent in examinations about exchequer bills.* Mr. Harley began to open of what consequence it was to proceed against these offenders; he left it undetermined what he meant by it, whether impeachment, attainder, or the ordinary forms. I don't doubt but others were to have gone on with that part, if Mr. Montague had not desired that there might be another day of examination, which is appointed on Saturday, by which time he thought he might be ready with an information relating to this matter, that might be fit to be laid before them. He has a mind to be retaliating, whether it be upon Duncombe or not, I can't tell.

I had letters last night from my Lord Portland of the 14th from Calais; he was received there with great ceremony and civility, and was going that day to Boulogne.

I acquainted your Grace in my last with some overtures my Lord Sunderland had made towards a reconciliation: he has made farther steps in it since, as your Grace will see by the enclosed copies of his letters. I have shewn that of the 16th to Lord Orford, Lord Wharton, and Mr. Montague, and have sent a copy of it to my Lord Chancellor.

* The commencement of those examinations which ended in the trial of Duncombe a considerable time after.

My hurrying backward and forward to Kensington hinders me from waiting upon him as often as I would; but on Sunday I shewed him and the other Lords his first letter. I thought they were then inclined to meet and consider one with another what was to be done; there seems to be more occasion for it now that Lord Sunderland desires to be informed how distrusts are to be removed, and that he will do what he can towards it. He has farther explained himself to Mr. Overton, who is come from Windsor to-day. He offers to live in entire confidence with them, promises to labour like a horse, which is his own expression, that my Lord Wharton may have the seals. But thinks it would be much easier effected, if they would be contented with my Lord Tankerville, and for his own part he desires no employment. But if it be thought necessary, he will come to the councils as my Lord Rochester did; and he would take it for a great gratification, if Mr. Montague would be reconciled to Mr. Guy, and he would then undertake that Mr. Guy should never give them any jealousy or offence, and for Mr. Duncombe,* he has nothing to say for him. Lastly, he declares he will never look towards business, but upon the invitation of the Duke of Shrewsbury, Lord Chancellor, Lord Orford, Lord Wharton, and Mr. Montague.

I imagine your Grace will think these reasonable

* Charles Duncombe was about this period, I believe, Receiver-general of the Excise.

terms, and fit to be deliberated upon. Mr. Overton is gone this evening to acquaint my Lord Chancellor with them. What will be resolved I know not, but this I may foresee, that if they are not accepted of, I shall, perhaps, be ill-looked upon, for concerning myself so far, though I am sure this is not a business I thrust myself into. Your Grace sees how I come to it, and will judge candidly whether I could act otherwise, especially being persuaded the King will grow more and more uneasy as he loses the hopes of this Lord's return, and will entertain a coldness for those who keep him away, the end whereof I fear would be to lessen their own interest, the King's satisfaction, and the public welfare.

I hope your Grace will take this matter into consideration, and if you think it of moment, let my Lord Chancellor know your thoughts upon it. Mr. Montague told me this morning he thought that would do, if you were Chamberlain, and Lord Wharton Secretary; this was his opinion off hand. I heartily wish they would meet and conclude upon what they think most proper, which I am sure I shall acquiesce in, and trouble them no farther. But I fancy whenever your Grace returns to business, you will think it an ease to you, to have one of my Lord Sunderland's activeness, experience, and interest joined with you, especially if he keeps his word, and goes a clear and above board way to work.

I write of all these matters with very great submission, as knowing myself very unfit for intrigue, and therefore wish I was a great way further from it.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

20th of Jan. 1697-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 17th, and moved the King this day about Mr. Brown,* who I found had his petition; but he said he knew not how he could grant a licence to one who had been King James's Secretary, and came over about the time of the plot, was put into the Tower and not released but upon condition of leaving the kingdom. Besides, while he was in Holland, his conversation there was not such as might entitle him to favour.

I much doubt, therefore, whether he will have leave to stay. I hope my Lord Bellew will not have the same difficulty. But the King has not yet resolved to whom this grace shall be extended. He spoke of it to my Lord Chancellor this evening, and I am to attend with my list of petitioners on Saturday morning, and either then or on Sunday at the Cabinet Council his Majesty will declare his pleasure.

In the meantime he has likewise deferred giving any directions for bringing up my Lord Clancarty to Westminster Hall; this is no ill sign for him: and of late my Lord Sunderland appears, by his friends, to solicit the saving his life.

I acquainted your Grace in my last what advances

* Evidently a very different person from the Brown we have hitherto heard so much of.

my Lord Sunderland had made towards a reconciliation. I happened to see my Lord Orford and Lord Chancellor separately yesterday before Mr. Overton saw either. He was with my Lord Chancellor yesterday in the afternoon, and came to me without any great hopes: he seemed to have more after having seen him to-day. It was intended my Lord Orford should have met them, but he excused it; and his Lordship telling me yesterday, that however they might be inclined to live well with my Lord Sunderland, the difficulty would be how they should answer his expectations, since he was so liable to be fallen upon, and the rather for going away as he did, and they could not answer for their friends, that they should be able to protect him. I can't but think that this has good reason in it, for I find a displeasure against Lord Sunderland among some leading Whigs, which they will not easily lay aside. They think themselves stronger and more united by his absence, and it appears so of late, whether that be the only reason I can't tell. But the debate about the officers' half-pay, and what passed to-day in relation to the grants, as you will see by the enclosed, shews the party was never more unanimous, and if it lasts thus, they will carry all before them.

My opinion, therefore, is, they will stand in no need of my Lord Sunderland as to the transactions in the House; whether they will keep their ground as well at Court without him is another question,

though those who are strongest in the House of Commons, and in possession of the management, methinks should not be in danger of being discarded for the sake of any one man.

This being the case, I make the less wonder that they are not more in haste to meet and consider what they would return to the proposals made; perhaps they have done it, and if so, one may guess what they resolve.

Lord Sunderland I hear is come to town to-day with his Lady, and is, as it were, incognito, intending to go to Althorpe to-morrow. But I suppose he will first endeavour to be satisfied what he has to trust to, and what measures shall be left him to take.

If there be no agreement, I perceive what fain some people will give to things at Kensington, viz., that the Whigs are indeed united, and have made themselves strong; but it is for carrying on their own interest, and for their private support, to which the concerns of the public must give way.

I would not omit laying any thing before your Grace, for you will be advised with in this matter, or offer your advice where you think it proper: for my own part I can have no particular concern, whether this Lord be in or out. I wish that may succeed only which may be best for the common good, but as I was writ and spoke to upon this subject, I hope I have discharged myself no otherwise than I ought.

I had a letter this evening from my Lord Portland of the 16th from Montreuil, where he rested, that day being Sunday. There is nothing more in it, than he hoped to be at Paris on Friday.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

22nd of Jan. 1697-8.

I understand by Mr. Arden, that your Grace does not find the weather proper for a journey to Grafton. I hope, therefore, the Letters I writ by the two last posts will find their way to Eyford.

It may be necessary for your Grace to consider what I writ on Tuesday with regard to yourself and your friends; they are so taken up with the present matters, particularly Mr. Montagu is so engaged in retorting upon those who he thinks would have been loading him, that he is not at leisure for other reflections, and I wish he may be successful in his design as he calls it, of carrying the war into the enemy's country. He has undertaken it with great mettle; but by this day's transactions it is to be feared the management of it will be left to the Lords of the Treasury only, of which number perhaps Mr. Pelham will bear no great share neither. Mr. Palmer, as your Grace will see by the enclosed, is so involved in the matter started, that Mr. Duncombe is sure not only of all his artifices for the bringing

him off, but he may go a great length towards disposing the Yorkshire Members in his favour, and the rather now he is their countryman by his purchases; and I know not whether that may not have some consequences as to the weakening and disuniting a party which seemed to be well set before, in which consideration I wish my Lord Sunderland's proposals for an accommodation had been accepted with a good grace, at the time they were offered. I don't think it is too late yet, but I don't perceive people are in a humour ever to close with them. At least, hitherto they say they have not met upon it, or if they have since, they will not mention what they incline to, one may conclude they have no mind to a reconciliation. If they can carry on their business as well without it at Kensington, they may be in the right; but if the King shall think this Lord wanting, he had better be there with their consent than otherwise.

When he was here on Thursday he made a visit to my Lord Albemarle: it is very likely he might see the King then too. I hear he came back in very good humour. If I had not been at Kensington at the Council, I should have seen him, for he called at the office that evening. This favour was done me, because he thinks I would promote a union which I am very insignificant in; but I can't but wish it, as far as I have a notion, that both sides may find their account in it. It is much, I perceive, that it will depend chiefly upon what opinion your

Grace shall have of it, and if you dislike it, I must own myself very much in the wrong to have had any thoughts that way. But if you judge it reasonable and convenient, there is nothing can have so great an influence in promoting it.

The King has considered this day the list of that petition for leave to stay. There are about seventy of them, and not many refused; but Mr. Brown is one of those, as also Sir George Maxwell, and Mr. Macdonald.

Lord Bellew and Mr. Plowden have leave to stay, and I shall despatch their warrants.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Jan. 25th, 1697-8.

The House has been sitting till eight this morning. It has taken up so much time to dispose of Mr. Duncombe to the Tower, as your Grace will see by the enclosed, and therefore I must be the shorter in acknowledging your Grace's Letter of the 22nd.

I believe I understand your Grace's opinion of the point proposed, though I have not seen Mr. Montague since, or any other on that subject. He has been hotly engaged this day and with great success, which Duncombe's imprudence, and his friends obstinacy have a good deal contributed to, for had he withdrawn as he found it insisted on, his own lavish-

ness of tongue had not destroyed him, and now he has made his case equal to Knight* or Barton.†

I hear by my Lord Spencer, that Mr. Overton was with Mr. Montague this morning, and that he found him very well disposed towards an accommodation, and expressed himself as if the event of that day would be of consequence, and that it would be much easier if Duncombe were well mortified. That part is now done to purpose, and 'tis certain the party will be more considerable by it, and some of those my Lord Sunderland might have an inclination for, he will be ashamed of. If victory don't puff men up, I believe the reconciliation may be more entire than before.

I hope it will not be necessary for your Grace to take any notice of what I writ concerning the prejudices I might receive in some people's opinion, if this affair were slighted till one sees the issue of it that cannot be judged of. I only hinted at the consequences that often attend these undertakings.

This is a very busy week on account of the crowds that come for licenses; the King has allowed to be about one hundred, and some of them have been since retracted, viz., Carwyn, Brent's widow and

* John Knight, Treasurer of the Customs.

† Bartholomew Barton, in the Excise Office. Both of the above were implicated with Duncombe in false indorsements on Exchequer Bills. When first issued, these bills have no interest, but when paid in on any of the King's taxes, so as to be a second time issued from the Exchequer, an interest of 7½ per cent. was allowed, so that a number of the Officers of Excise, Customs, and Exchequer made a trade of forging the endorsement.

daughters, and some Irish officers, as Colonel Nicholas Purcell and others.

Lord Montgomery petitioned, but was refused immediately. There is nothing said of the Earl of Clancarty.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Jan. 27th, 1697-8.

I have little to trouble your Grace with by this post. The inclosed will shew you what was done upon Mr. Duncombe's petition.

I hope your Grace's friends stand a little better disposed towards Lord Sunderland. At least they will less fear his return, when his creatures and confidents are so blasted, that he will be ashamed to own them. I believe he will not think of coming up to town yet a while.

We have no letters yet from my Lord Portland since his arrival at Paris. We must expect to be overwhelmed with foreign letters, since there will be four mails due to-morrow.

The Jacobites are enraged at this last Act for sending them out of the kingdom, and that a licence is refused to so many of their principal men. Few of the Irish officers have leave to stay, though they pretend to it by the capitulation of Limerick, or having surrendered themselves. They are in a rage about it, and more ready for mischief than ever.

We must go on now with the execution of the Act, and those that are found here after the day must be taken up and prosecuted.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Jan. 29th, 1697-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's Letter of the 24th, and am very much obliged that you are pleased to let me know your thoughts in relation to Lord Sunderland.

I shall communicate them to my Lord Chancellor as soon as I can get an opportunity. By the backwardness I find in your Grace's friends to come to any resolution in this matter, I imagine they could rather wish to act without him, and therefore would not be willing to take much pains to work their friends up to any better opinion of him. I think they consider the matter but on one side. I wish they do not missuppose that the King will be as well satisfied, if he be kept still at a distance, and that your Grace will be willing to supply alone that troublesome part of a constant attendance on the King. I don't know how far the King opens himself to others in this matter, but so much I can perceive, that he relies upon having my Lord Sunderland about him again, and intends to concern himself in it, when he thinks it a proper time. He

depends so entirely upon your moderation, credit with your friends, and inclination to make him easy, that he will employ your Grace to make the reconciliation. But he does not expect it should be done by letter, but chooses rather to stay till your Grace may be in a condition to come up to town, and that he don't expect till your Grace finds yourself able to undertake the journey, and then not to stay beyond what you think fit yourself.

This certainly will be the most effectual way of bringing it to a conclusion. I don't know whether my Lord Sunderland be disposed in the meantime to have patience till you can come up. But I hear my Lord Arran, and some concerned for him, are very desirous of seeing something done towards the bringing him hither. I suppose their solicitations will not much advance it, while the King has another method in his thoughts, though they will do well to keep the business warm, that the difficulties may grow less.

I don't find Mr. Pelham's proposal of a loan brings in the money as was expected for the immediate disbanding of the army. The funds not being settled how people shall be paid within the year, they are not over forward to lend their money. I believe the money for that purpose must at last come out of the Land Tax.

I have not heard much of the Commissioners of Trade, not being able to come early to the House. I don't find people have generally any great venera-

tion for them, and their accounts are more liable to be found fault with than otherwise.

There has been little done in the House these two days, as your Grace will see by the enclosed.

I shall acquaint the King with your recommendations of Colonel Brudenell; but hardly expect an answer, whatever may be done afterwards, and as for establishing more Marines, it seems to me a very doubtful point.

The King is very much for it, and they may be of use both at sea and land; but if the Parliament shall grow jealous that this is a contrivance under another name, to keep more forces than they intended, they may endanger the keeping the two regiments that are now on foot, which perhaps would not be otherwise questioned.

We are torn to pieces by people that are refused licences, and I expect to be as ill-treated on account of some that shall obtain them. Such is our good-nature and compassion. The King happened to sign a good number of these warrants and *bills* at the Council on Thursday. I hear there was notice taken of it, as if it were expected none should have had leave but who had been first proposed at Council; that would have been a way not to have had above six despatched, and perhaps there are 20,000 people affected by the Act, and some are cases of the greatest equity and compassion imaginable. For my own particular, I shall never be disturbed at anybody's unreasonable displeasure. I am sure they

won't find I have profited a farthing upon all that has passed, and yet I am scandalized at the impertinence of the Stamp Office, who have printed a list of such whose warrants were brought thither to be stamped, and it was sold this day at Parliament-stairs with every name almost mistaken.

We have had four Dutch posts yesterday, and to-day the King has the letters Monsieur Jurieu sends, and the rest are enclosed. We have no letters either from my Lord Portland or the Duke of St. Alban's.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Feb. 5, 1697-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 2nd. I suppose you have heard from Mr. Montague, and find him well disposed. I saw my Lord Orford this morning, who thought the business might be brought to a speedy issue; that if your Grace had the White Staff, my Lord Wharton the Seals, and my Lord Tankerville were made President, this would be such a proof of my Lord Sunderland's intentions to live well with them, that nothing more need to be required; and this being done, he thought they might dispose other people to think better of him than they seemed to do at present.

I believed this to be a reasonable test, and supposed it would not be difficult to see the effect of it; but coming afterwards to the House, I found Mr.

Montague startled at what a leading man had said to him.

I suppose it is Mr. Smith, though he did not name him, who had been expostulating with him about an intended accommodation which he heard was driving on; and he declared, that for his part, he would have nothing to do with a man,* who had been at the bottom of the vexations put upon them, and that he and his emissaries had, to the utmost of their power, been contriving their ruin: others might be as good-natured as they please, and forget all that was passed; but, for his part, he would never trust those who were capable of such practices, and he must leave those who would enter into such engagements.

I am satisfied unless these prejudices can be removed, it will be in vain to think of a reconciliation. Mr. Smith is too honest and too considerable a man to have any such thing done without his approbation, and I think that should be first obtained before any further steps be made.

Perhaps it will become me to mention something of it to him, lest those who have alarmed him with the treaty, might represent me as otherwise concerned in it than I really am, who have no other aim but their service and interest. I am afraid the things they wish done, I mean as to two of the particulars, will very hardly be accomplished without Lord Sunderland's assistance. And I think Mr. Smith so

* Lord Sunderland.

reasonable, notwithstanding his present sentiments, that if they took any pains to convince him what was most for the general good, he would not stand out in opposition against it; but he may have reason to be jealous and displeased if any thing is done without him.

I fancy my Lord Wharton is easier in this matter than he has been, and therefore I conclude he is not so indifferent whether he be Secretary or not as might be expected.

The inclosed will inform your Grace what the House did to-day. Mr. Pulteney's compliment was not accepted of as coming from an advocate of Duncombe, who enforced moderation with an eye in that case. I hear those three bills will be brought in on Monday next.

The King went to Richmond yesterday morning, and lay there last night, and hunted this day.

My Lord Chancellor has not yet got rid of his cold, he went this morning to Mortlock, and does not return till Monday.

I hear of an ordinary fellow taken up in Northamptonshire upon the late Act, for staying here without licence; and I have sent for Habin, the chirurgeon's widow, from Richmond, on the same account. I should not have been so hasty in it, but that her neighbours were scandalised at her behaviour, and have been in apprehension for the King's safety by reason of a resort of Irish officers, who used to frequent her house, which lies in the way the King goes to Lutton's Lodge.

MR. VERNON TO THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY.

Feb. 8, 1697-8.

I have the honour of your Grace's Letter of the 29th. My Lord Montgomery went into France at the beginning of the revolution, and had the Prince of Orange's pass, and returned again before the declaration of war. However, he did not think fit to stand it, but went away on Sunday last. My Lord Aylesbury, who went the day before, had his lodgings searched somewhere in Kent, by some that pretended a warrant to look for the Lord Montgomery, who they said was running away from his bail. I did not know any other reason they could have for it, for I have not heard of any orders to stop him, and I suppose the King's Bench or Sessions will discharge the bail of those that are bound by this act to quit the kingdom, when it shall be made appear they have done so in obedience to the act, though Mr. Attorney refused to consent upon a motion made in behalf of one that was going away.

I acquainted the King with Colonel Brudenell's desires, and your Grace's concern for him. His Majesty is well disposed towards him, but he don't see yet what he can do for him. I am afraid, therefore, he is not one of those designed for Ireland, and what provision there can be among the marines is very uncertain. I have not seen any body but Mr. Montague since I received your Grace's former letter. He seems well disposed to a reconciliation, and desires only to see the White Staff in your Grace's

hands, and the Seals in my Lord Wharton's. If my Lord Tankerville were likewise added for President of the Council, as has been talked of, the party would still be the stronger. I believe he is of opinion that nothing will be done to purpose till your Grace is upon the spot, and he will undertake nothing can happen to make you uneasy, which I believe he may answer for, there being no appearance of disturbance; and where it might have been expected, I think sufficient care has been taken by my Lord Chancellor to prevent it.

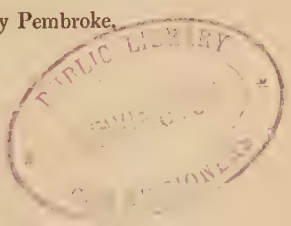
A messenger has just now arrived from my Lord ——,* who came from Paris on Wednesday last; he says my Lord Portland arrived there the Friday before.

My Lord writes that he had a private audience on Tuesday, but had no opportunity to talk of business. He complains already that he finds every thing very dear there, and hopes to stay there no longer than is absolutely necessary. I find he is but very indifferently lodged at the Count d'Auvergne's, and is fain to build conveniences to entertain his company.

The enclosed will inform your Grace how the proceedings go on against Duncombe, though he writ to-day to the Speaker, to thank him for the time allowed him to put his answer in, and promised to do it as soon as his gout would give him leave.

I believe Mr. Harley moved for a bill, as knowing no other way would be taken. The thoughts of an

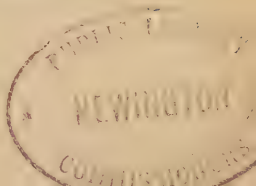
* The word here wanting is probably Pembroke.



impeachment were laid aside, when it was considered that his money and Lordship's tricks might puzzle the cause.

Jack Pulteney is his great advocate upon all occasions; others reserve themselves to improve all chicanes without coming to the merit of the matter.

Mr. Prior was fallen ill since he came to Paris, but was growing well again.

END OF VOL. I.

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